

WORKING IN SHIFTS: CHARACTER AND MOBILITY IN LATE NINETEENTH-
AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE

by
Kara Wedekind

A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland
October, 2016

© 2016 Kara Wedekind
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

Virginia Woolf's quip, "On or around December 1910, human character changed," is by now perhaps the most widely quoted of statements about character by a writer. But how effectively did writing capture characters or their transformations in the years around 1910? This dissertation examines literary experimentation with character that produced results that were incomplete—but also that prove to be revealing about literature, work, and their interrelation. In body swap fiction, the reader is required to see one character (typically from the upper middle class) in the body of another (typically someone who performs wageless labor). In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, the reader must see the male characters as both victors and victims of gender-based and labor asymmetry. And in Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*, observations of characters at work heighten the reader's sense of the inaccessibility of characters. In all three cases, there is an implicit worry that classical economic wage system cannot recognize particular kinds of work and, by extension, particular kinds of characters. Yet as I show, these narrative constraints or problems have their compensations: raising previously undisclosed wageless and other "invisible labors" to visibility; theorizing forms of solidarity about what counts as work; and heightening the reader's capacity to perceive the labor processes that underlie the object world.

Advisor and First Reader: Professor Douglas Mao. Second Reader: Mark Thompson.

Acknowledgements

A dissertation is an unfinished work, submitted by a perfectionist who has learned just enough about her field of scholarship to understand how limited her insight is. Submitting a dissertation is therefore no easy feat. The process, in my case, has been made bearable because of the support I have received from colleagues, friends, and family. I am forever indebted to my advisor Professor Douglas Mao, who has worked tirelessly to help me complete this project. Crafting these acknowledgements is such a difficult task because it is impossible to capture how much I admire him and how much I owe him. In reading his work on aesthetics, I have been freed from my skepticisms about the subject and, in turn, have developed a keener appreciation of beauty—a great gift indeed. As an advisor, Doug has supported me during three major health crises, several misdiagnoses, and countless medical tests. He has read every draft I have written, listened patiently to every incoherent articulation of my ideas, and championed me when I could not do so myself. His insights are always finely observed, thoughtfully prepared, and gently delivered. Early in my doctoral candidacy, I admired Doug because he seemed guided by a true generosity of spirit, an indefatigable work ethic, and a boundless intellectual curiosity. Through the intervening years, my admiration has only grown and he has since become the best model of how to be a scholar in the world that I have yet encountered. Simply put, I am a better writer and thinker for having known him. I only wish that he could have edited this passage to help me more effectively communicate my thoughts, to elevate my language, and to help me better convey my sincere appreciation and gratitude.

I must next thank Professor Anne-Elizabeth Brodsky, who truly saved my life. When a doctor did not prescribe me antibiotics after a freak accident, I developed an infection that ultimately proved to be life-threatening. When Anne-Elizabeth learned that I was in pain several days after the accident, she encouraged me to seek further treatment at the university clinic. That decision was crucial because I was subsequently rushed to a local emergency room, where I learned that my infection could have been fatal or required amputation. Luckily, after weeks of rehabilitation, my condition improved: there are simply no words that can adequately express my gratitude for her counsel during that distressing period of my life. I must also thank Anne-Elizabeth, Will Evans, and Pat Kain for enabling me to be a more effective teacher and public speaker through their extensive training at the Expository Writing program. I am also grateful to Tracy Glink, who has helped me navigate the university bureaucracy and has ameliorated every crisis that I have encountered.

I have lately been reminded of how remarkable the English department at Johns Hopkins University can be. The graduate students and faculty have created an intellectual community that can be challenging in the best way possible. It has been a rare gift to study with so many exemplary thinkers who listen so attentively to other peoples' ideas. I have found that this training has made me a much better collaborator and intellectual in all subsequent career opportunities and experiences. Professor Mark Thompson graciously helped me with logistics and provided a helpful sounding board in the final years of my research, Professor Chris Nealon has shaped my scholarship by introducing me to some of my favorite thinkers, and Professors Amanda Anderson, Sharon Cameron, Simon During, and Frances Ferguson were critical to my early

scholarly development. I must thank Christiane Gannon, who brought me food during my recovery and provided me with a more spiritual kind of sustenance during our graduate tenure. I will always admire the steely resolve and crackling wit of Beth Steedley, the unwavering kindness of Jessica Valdez, and the wry intelligence of Maggie Vintner. I have sincerely benefitted from being in the presence of so many brilliant minds in graduate school, including my writing partner Elisha Menzies, Nan Zhang, Joe Haley, Chris Westcott, Erica Tempesta, Mande Zecca, Courtney Andree, Jess Wagoner, Ksenia Gorbenko, Ksenia Sidorenko, Joe Varghese, Michelle Duncan, Elisha Cohn, Robert Day, Patrick Fessenbecker, Doug Tye, and Nick Bujak, among many others.

I must also thank my friends for all the support they have given me before, during, and after graduate school. Maren Hozempa and Erik Donald opened their home to me when my medical bills were at their height, Jenny Orrico has provided me with a steady supply of humor and hijinks, Rachel Calvin and John Whitehead live their ideals in a way that will always inspire me, and Shannon Harwick has been my long-time confidante. I will only be able to acknowledge briefly the following friends who have had a monumental impact on my life: David Crane, Margaret Hagan, Vijay Menon, Devon Freeny, Shakir Standley, Mehr Qayyum, Kenny Nguyen, Nicole Howard, Maya Ganguli, Nicole Chaudhari, Jessica Cooperman, Vicki Cheung, Maria Mora, Irina Gordon, Bella Gordon, Dan McCormick, Liz Ptacek, Whet Moser, Kyle Holtan, William Wan, Johanna Juni, Mike Robinson, Corey Dubois, Jon Fogg, Alicia Peden, Brian Trump, among countless others. I have been shaped by these people in profound ways and consider myself incredibly fortunate to have known them. I must also thank my family: my uncle Larry Demski, whose good-natured teasing has prevented my

scholarship from being untethered from reality, and my cousins Cheryl and Michael Demski for their warmth and care. Neither of my grandmothers nor my aunt was able to see me complete the doctoral program, but their unshakeable belief in me has made it possible nonetheless. I carry their love with me always. My brother was my first friend in life and he has been supporting all my endeavors ever since. I finally must thank my mother and father because they have motivated me to accomplish this and every other goal. My father has always believed me capable of greatness and my mother will do anything in her power to help me achieve my dreams. I could fill many more pages describing their deep and abiding kindness, but they would rather have me spend my time working on whatever goal I might cherish next.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1-24
Chapter One: Formal Problems and Pleasures in Body Swap Fiction	25-81
Chapter Two: Utopia and Exodus in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's <i>Herland</i>	82-123
Chapter Three: Managing Narration in Virginia Woolf's <i>Night and Day</i>	124-204

Introduction

At twenty-six years old, Thomas Anstey Guthrie could boast that his first novel *Vice Versa* (1882) would be published by the same imprint that had carried William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.¹ The strength of the publishing house signified a great deal to Guthrie because he assumed that the association would garner his fantasy novel, in which an importer-exporter trades identities with his boarding school-bound son, the kind of acclaim that the realist novel had received. The immediate critical response was, in fact, quite good, and Guthrie's commercial success granted him entrée into the best literary salons and cultural events of the time. At one gathering, Bram Stoker whispered the plot for a fantasy epic that he thought would make a good sequel to *Vice Versa*. Demurring politely, Guthrie declined to borrow the premise and only regretted the decision years later, when he read the finished product of *Dracula* (1897). If Guthrie's autobiography is to be trusted, it was at another of these parties that he became acquainted with Henry James, who sought advice on his most recent play. Whatever guidance was offered or received, the aspiring playwright did not achieve comparable acclaim: Guthrie includes an account of the boos and jeers that he heard in the audience on opening night. The biographical vignette ends with Guthrie counseling James to make his work more accessible to the audience, as well as an intimation that such advice was not appreciated.²

Despite his failure to guide James's stage career, Guthrie could pride himself on affecting the theatrical world in a different way: he was able to influence his literary hero,

¹ Thomas Anstey Guthrie. *A Long Retrospect*. (110)

² Ibid. (39)

the librettist W. S. Gilbert. There was even a symmetry to the exchange of ideas: Gilbert's fanciful "Mab Ballads" had originally inspired the young man to write *Vice Versa* and Gilbert, in turn, was influenced by the mania for body-swaps to write *Happy Arcadia* (1889). This short musical features one of Gilbert's signature dizzying plots: a husband assumes his wife's identity so he can commit crimes undetected; the wife wants to be her daughter's suitor in order to abandon her familial responsibilities; the daughter wishes to resemble her taciturn father because she is tired of love triangles; and the suitor wants the girl's identity so he can be pursued in love. In contrast to James's more serious theatrical offering, this silly conceit delighted the members of the audience, including Lewis Carroll, who referenced *Happy Arcadia* in a short poem. But Guthrie influenced theatergoers at the turn-of-the century more directly as well, capitalizing on the success of *Vice Versa* by adapting it for the stage. Stanislaus Joyce records in his autobiography that his brother was even cast as the headmaster in an 1889 production at Belvedere College.³ Further, James Joyce scholars have identified *Vice Versa* as the Whitsuntide play that Stephen Dedalus performs in *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*.⁴ Bearing in mind that the play depicts a child masquerading as an adult and an adult masquerading as a child, the narration about Dedalus's performance takes on new significance: "For one moment he seemed clothed in the real apparel of boyhood: and, as he stood in the wings among the other players, he shared the common mirth amid which the drop scene was hauled upwards by two able-bodied priests with violent jerks and all awry."⁵ There is a subtle irony in the description of Stephen as dressed in the "real apparel of boyhood,"

³ Stanislaus Joyce. *My Brother's Keeper*. (88)

⁴ A. Nicholas Fagnoli and Michael Patrick Gillespie. *James Joyce A to Z: The Essential Reference to the Life and Work*. (7)

⁵ James Joyce. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. (95)

when he wears a headmaster's costume in a play about a middle-aged man pretending to be a schoolboy.

If *Vice Versa* offered Joyce an avenue for ironic distance from the school experience, the novel provided C. S. Lewis with a method for describing that experience with unprecedented authenticity. Lewis contends that *Vice Versa* is “the only truthful school story in existence” because the elements of farce “bring out in their true colors (which would otherwise seem exaggerated) the sensations which every boy had on passing from the warmth and softness and dignity of his home life to the privation, raw and sordid ugliness, of school.”⁶ The plasticity of identity exchange fiction (if not of *Vice Versa* in particular)—its opportunities for both imaginative play and social commentary—must also have been apparent to Virginia Woolf's mother Julia Stephen, who incorporates that dynamic in a short story she penned for her children. The tale depicts two young siblings who explore London while dressed as a crossing-sweeper and a cat's meat seller.⁷ Their adventures without parental supervision prove to be thrilling until the siblings lose their money and fear that they will become fixed in their make-believe roles.

Guthrie may have expected a lasting celebrity because he was a best-selling author, with *Vice Versa*, or because his publishing house had a long-established history. His autobiography, however, attests to a dwindling number of invitations to salons and events over the following years. And indeed his diminishing cultural influence roughly coincides with what Hugh Kenner identifies as a shift occurring around 1870, where critically regarded novelists “were coming onto the scene and enjoying some vogue but

⁶ C.S. Lewis. *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*. (41)

⁷ S. P. Rosenbaum. *Victorian Bloomsbury: The Early History of the Bloomsbury Group Vol. I*. (85)

by no means best sellerdom; meanwhile best-seller after best-seller was bursting and sparkling through the gray British sky en route not to classic status but to a graveyard.”⁸ Although this cultural shift might be visible from the perspective of history, the reviewers of the time certainly could not foresee Guthrie’s trajectory. Guthrie himself expresses surprise not only about his own exclusion from the cultural scene but also about the way that Henry James, a laughingstock in the theater, would later become celebrated for his inscrutable novels. We therefore could consider, with Guthrie as a touchstone, how the transition from a supply-side model of literary production to a demand-side model, where early market segmentation developed, led cultural figures to be less accurate in their predictions of success. This could broaden into a discussion of the aesthetic value of difficulty and pleasure in modernist fiction and of the many distinctions between high culture and popular fiction of the time. The latter narrative could be further complicated by contrasting Guthrie with Bram Stoker, who enjoyed greater cultural currency despite working in the same fantasy genre. Such a comparison could further lead to an analysis of how the two authors balanced the imaginative play of fantasy against the demand for realism at the turn of the century.

All of these modes of inquiry thread through the dissertation that follows, but I want to approach the problem first through a contrast between Guthrie’s immediate impact and the longer arc of his cultural legacy. Why, in other words, did *Vice Versa* neither achieve “classic status” nor quite become relegated to the “graveyard” as Kenner describes it? It bears noting that if critics at the turn of the century could not predict the rise and fall of his celebrity, authors of the era were equally confounded. Although *Vice*

⁸ Hugh Kenner. *A Sinking Island: The Modern English Writers*. (12)

Versa was commercially profitable, it was not clear how the results could be replicated.

A recurring motif of Guthrie's biographical anecdotes is that he had his greatest influence on children's culture: however, the British and American authors of other body-swap texts published between 1882 and 1936 did not tend to court that audience.⁹ Early body-swaps perhaps demonstrate what Franco Moretti has described as the "diversity spectrum" of literary production, how "when a new genre first arises, and no 'central' convention has yet crystallized, its space-of-forms is usually open to the most varied experiments."¹⁰ In other words, it is typical for authors to fail to discern what makes a literary invention appealing to an audience; therefore, they will isolate different aspects of the text from which they will develop their own projects.

To capture the range of this literary experimentation, we can briefly review the following sampling of texts. R. Andom may borrow the whimsical pseudonym construct from Guthrie—whose nom de plume was F. Anstey, a play on "fancy"—but his 1902 "A Story of Identity Exchange" lacks the charm and humor of its predecessor. The prolific socialist Walter Besant directly references Guthrie's characters in *The Doubts of Dives* (1892), but only so he can theorize strategies for distributing resources more equally among the social classes through a story about a millionaire and clerk trading lives. The body-swap conceit is used to illuminate the plight of an incarcerated debtor in William Magnay's *The Poached Peerage* (1909) and a man's remorse about unfulfilled ambitions during his recovery from the global pandemic of influenza in Walter de la Mare's *The*

⁹ The association of early body swap fiction with a young demographic lingers, as Caroline Hunt writes: "This plot, the role reversal or identity exchange, seems to have a peculiar appeal to adolescents, offering a kind of wish fulfillment that suits their unique needs."⁹ Caroline C. Hunt. "Counterparts: Identity Exchange and the Young Adult Audience," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* (109)

¹⁰ Franco Moretti. *Maps, Graphs Trees*. (77)

Return (1910). Edgar Rice Burroughs envisions daylong full-body transplants as wartime wish fulfillment, when the protagonist awakens in the battlefields of No-Man's-Land and discovers that his legs are shredded by a bomb blast in *The Mastermind of Mars* (1927): "...so great was the mental effort that I made to throw off the hideous bonds of my mutilated flesh....and suddenly I stood naked upon two good legs looking down upon the bloody distorted thing that had been I."¹¹ *An Exchange of Souls* (1911) seems to draw on horror conventions, but the conclusion suggests that the novel actually might be a coded romance between a lifelong bachelor and a transgendered, composite character.¹² Thorne Smith lost some of his readership because *Turnabout* (1931), where a husband and wife swap bodies, included images that were considered pornographic at the time.

These texts are far afield from the father-and-son identity exchange in *Vice Versa*: in fact, the conceit of an adult and a child changing identities was not revisited until 1936. Even P.G. Wodehouse's *Laughing Gas*, the only other body-swap of the era involving adolescence, follows the misadventures of an aristocrat who briefly lives as a child star in order to satirize the Hollywood system and to describe the hardships of working under a movie studio contract. Rather than depict parents and children exchanging lives, authors of this time period wrote about individuals changing socioeconomic circumstances, genders, and professional status. Instead of universally adopting Guthrie's comic style, authors dabbled in romance, social commentary, horror, and adventure. For that matter, most turn-of-the-century body swaps are not set in motion, as *Vice Versa* is, by a set of

¹¹ Edgar Rice Burroughs. *The Mastermind of Mars*. (2)

¹² "For a long time it satisfied me to think that just as all the rivers run into the sea, so all the personalities are hereafter merged into that of a supreme being. I find myself unable any longer to hold that theory. It had its philosophical consolations for me. I had missed most of the best things that life holds. My own personality had been balked and insignificant. I believed that death ended it, partly, perhaps because I wished death to end it.... It is a conviction that the story of Myas and Alice Lade is not yet finished, and that at some future time I shall take part in that story." Barry Pain. *An Exchange of Souls*. (105)

voluntary and interlocking wishes that such an exchange should occur. Bodies instead can be traded as a result of coercion or because a contract's terms have been occluded; the exchanges can be botched, repeated countless times, planned for months, determined on a whim, and even involve multiple partners. The diversity spectrum for body-swaps is wide indeed.

If creative experimentation typically follows a successful literary innovation, then it also typically tapers off and coalesces into recognizable genre conventions. As Hugh Kenner explains in his discussion of popular fiction during the turn of the century, the literary techniques of a genre “evolve the way machines do, acquiring glitter and optional accessories, shedding surplus weight. As decades passed, readers and writers had educated one another into a vast consensus on the many small things that made narrative possible.”¹³ Franco Moretti describes the way the marketplace corrals creative innovation in more general and more trenchant terms: a literary novelty may inspire strange and experimental projects, but these are often “false starts”¹⁴ and “blind alleys” until “divergence becomes indeed, as Darwin had seen inseparable from extinction.”¹⁵ However, body-swaps do not quite fit either pattern: first, the variation is too broad, and second, the many “false starts” of body-swap fiction do not become extinct, but rather lie dormant. Contemporary body-swaps may be more strongly associated with adolescent popular culture because of the spate of films produced in the 1970s and 1980s—films

¹³ Hugh Kenner. *A Sinking Island: The Modern English Writers*. (43)

¹⁴ Franco Moretti. *Maps, Graphs Trees*. (81)

¹⁵ Ibid. (77)

such as *Freaky Friday*, *Vice Versa*,¹⁶ and *Like Father, Like Son*.¹⁷ However, the conceit has recently broadened again to include alternate pairings and more mature themes: body-swaps were featured in a television show demonstrating the limits of familial pairings,¹⁸ a married and a single man exchanging lives in (*The Change-Up*), a film in which a wealthy man has his consciousness inserted into a poor man's body in (*Self/Less*), and comedian Louis C. K.'s speculations about the content omitted in a film about a father/son swap.¹⁹ In other words, if the intergenerational pairing makes *Vice Versa* appealing to readers, then why do intragenerational and socioeconomically diverse dyads emerge in the wake of the first publication and at occasional intervals throughout the intervening decades?

Body-swaps are never fully extinguished from the cultural scene the way certain genres are: instead, there may show higher or lower frequency of publication or the

¹⁶ *Vice Versa* maintained a weak grip on cultural memory: it has been included in a number of children's fiction anthologies, was adapted for the stage twice, and has served as the inspiration for films of the same title in 1916, 1948, and even as late as 1988.

¹⁷ A key element of such films is the sense of equivalence; even though the movies are organized around the discovery that each character has idealized the other's life, there is no real material difference separating the characters. The parent, of course, has more power in terms of distributing household resources, but the films convey an understanding that the characters essentially share the same timeline.

¹⁸ In *Don't Trust the B— in 23 C*, James van der Beek gets cast against Karen Shipka in a father-daughter body swap before realizing how fraught the concept will be.

¹⁹ In an episode of the *Conan O'Brien Show*, comic Louis C. K. sets up a joke about the casting decisions in *Schindler's List*, but becomes distracted by speculating about a body swap film: "Louis C.K.: '*Schindler's List*, when it came out, it was a big deal. Now, it's just on T.V. It's something that you are just flipping around and you see a movie with Dudley Moore and Kirk Cameron switching bodies. I don't know if you saw that one, where they are like father and son and they switch bodies. So all of a sudden, Kirk Cameron whose like a teenager wakes up in his father's forty-year-old body with his fully formed penis and everything. And now Dudley Moore is in a little boy's...I mean, this isn't what they said the movie was about. It wasn't the focus of the movie. Ok, let me just speed ahead to what I was going to say.' Conan: 'I don't know what the hell happened there.'" (August 18, 2011) Much could be said of this digression, but I will draw attention to certain features of Louis C. K.'s comment. The comic references *Like Father, Like Son* in order to illustrate the strangeness of encountering a more important and intellectually rich cultural product after experiencing something inferior. Such a set-up requires the audience to share a sense that, as Roger Ebert says about these films, "the premise does not work." Yet, it is precisely the premise that intrigues Louis C.K. He earnestly considers what the film could be and what it "doesn't say" about the material experience of inhabiting a different body. Louis C.K.'s insight has been taken up by scores of other comics, who have explored other limitations and omissions of the form.

thematic content may skew to different audience demographics. If body-swap fiction evolves the way machines do, to repurpose Kenner's insight, then they shed certain features only to acquire them again. Nor do they conform to the strict evolutionary model proposed by Moretti, in which creative experimentation becomes streamlined into genre conventions that are eventually overturned by generational demands for different types of genres. By relying on the evolutionary model to evaluate literary output, Moretti focuses on "successful" works at the expense of "unsuccessful" attempts at problem-solving. And this is unfortunate because, as Eric Cazdyn explains, "formal invention attempts to come to terms with the most pressing sociopolitical concerns of a particular historical moment. What cannot be figured in, say, a social or political language, can be glimpsed by way of the aesthetic (sometimes in advance of the sociopolitical itself)."²⁰

The underlying questions posed by this dissertation, can in a sense be framed thus: how do body-swaps participate in a more general literary turn away from realism around the turn of the century; and to what "pressing sociopolitical concerns" do body-swaps, along with other texts that incorporate fantasy and the everyday, respond?

"The intermingling of fantasy modes in every moment of the development of the twentieth-century English novel remains an abiding but under-explored fact,"²¹ writes Robert Caserio in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century Novel*. This dissertation accepts the invitation to examine the relationship between modes of fantasy and the modern novel. Specifically, I trace a meditation on character inaccessibility that can be found not only in body-swap texts but also in

²⁰ Eric Cazdyn. *The Already Dead: The New Time of Politics, Culture, and Illness*. (32)

²¹ Robert Caserio. "Introduction." *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century Novel*. (7)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist utopia *Herland* and in Virginia Woolf's realist experiments with representing consciousness in *Night and Day*. I argue that the texts I examine in all three chapters index an implicit worry that the classical economic system of wage labor will not properly recognize particular kinds of work and, by extension, particular kinds of characters. The kinds of acquired skills that become precarious in these texts include wageless labor, the work of social reproduction, affective labor, self-management, and expertise as symbolic capital. And this precarity is tied to representations of characters who are internally coherent but appear divided, compound, or opaque from an external perspective. In body-swaps, a character is not recognized for his acquired skills, merit, or knowledge because he inhabits another's body. In *Herland*, Gilman creates a feminist utopia in order to raise the profile of socially reproductive labor—but also renders her male protagonist as much a victim of Herland gender asymmetry, as well as a victor of American gender hierarchy. In Woolf's *Night and Day*, characters' inaccessibility raises questions both about the rise of self-monitoring in work and about the invisibility of middle-class female labor.

The obfuscation of characters does provide compensations. The texts in this dissertation render visible previously undisclosed forms of labors, theorize forms of solidarity or affiliation about what counts as work, and grant insight into the labor processes behind the object world. I consider these compensations; and I argue too that the texts under examination here encode two forms of attention brought about by shifts in administrative needs in the period: one that looks outward on the managed body and one that turns that same gaze inward on the self. My dissertation ends with the suggestion that the conflict between an administrative gaze and a self-reflexive managerial

introspection is not resolved until modernists develop the stream of consciousness as an everyday form of attention. I indicate that what makes the stream of consciousness a successful innovation, as compared to the incomplete attempts at problem-solving represented by the texts in this dissertation, is that Woolf and other modernist writers discover how to create pleasure in the appreciation of knowledge and cognition without turning the reader's gaze towards the managed body. In this way, my dissertation approaches something akin to David Trotter's assessment of "paranoid modernism," in which he claims that "modernism ... shares with the mainstream fiction of the period an interest in expertise and its discontents."²²

Before elaborating the main argument of the dissertation, it might be useful to situate these modes of fantasy within the context of evolving literary conventions around the turn of the century. Critical consensus still more or less holds that the dominant literary style of nineteenth-century fiction was realism, which Astradur Eysteinnsson defines as a "mimetic processing of objective reality" and as the "fictional and literary embodiment of the communicative language acknowledged by the 'public sphere.'"²³ Realism is thus defined in terms of a finely observed representation of the external world, but the style also carries associations with public space and public action. During the late nineteenth century, however, there was a "crisis of representation," where literary conventions were transformed by either the emergence or the reemergence of diverse literary modes such as symbolism, naturalism, impressionism, romance, utopia, and stream of consciousness, and by a new flourishing of non-literary genres. David Trotter explains that "there was a feeling, more prevalent among writers than among critics that

²² David Trotter. *Paranoid Modernism*. (131)

²³ Astradur Eysteinnsson. *The Concept of Modernism* (192)

the novel as traditionally conceived was no longer up to the job: that its imaginary worlds did not, in fact, correspond to the way one's fellows spent their entire lives."²⁴ Although some critics have described the proliferation of non-realist modes by means of narratives of ruptures or breaks, more recent scholarly discourse suggests that the cultural turn sharpens extant tensions within realism. Alongside omniscient realism, there always has been a parallel history of what Ian Watt calls "the realism of presentation," which presents external reality from a character's subjective perspective.²⁵ Thus, one way to contextualize the turn away from a more formal realism around the late nineteenth century is to see how the realm of interiority was placed in tension with the mimetic description of the external world and the public sphere.

Michael Levenson captures the point of contention in *A Genealogy of Modernism*: "part of every fiction is *physis*, the elaboration of an external physical space, and part is *psyche*, the construction of an internal psychological space." For the Victorians, he argues, "the two regions open readily into one another: both submit to [the] narrating eye."²⁶ In contrast, many of the early writers of modernism, like Joseph Conrad, split the function of the narrator into two parts, as Levenson explains: "one tendency is toward a physical description confined to sensory detail, the other toward the creation of characters who can assume the traditional functions of the omniscient narrator... to direct attention, to interpret incidents, to evaluate behavior."²⁷ The external world was still considered objective under this model, Levenson writes, but meaning was derived from the

²⁴ David Trotter. "The Modernist Novel." *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. (70)

²⁵ Ian Watt. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. (290)

²⁶ Michael Levenson. *Genealogy of Modernism*. (7) Technically, he refers specifically to George Eliot but he does explain that the insight can be applied more broadly.

²⁷ Ibid. (9)

individual's apprehension of that external world. Trotter goes so far as to claim that "whatever is described in the most innovative fiction of the period is described in relation to, and only in relation to, a perceiving mind."²⁸ However, other critics have argued that foregrounding the perceiving mind over omniscient narration also entails a retreat from the public sphere: political action is subsumed to private reflection and the demands of work recede against the enticements of consumption. Peter Nicholls writes:

The world of human production explored in the work of writers like Dickens and Zola now largely disappeared, as an intricate thematics of domestic manners tied to the accumulation and transfer of capital gave way before a culture increasingly deriving its values and concepts from the realm of consumption. In the boom years of the *belle époque*, society seemed to present itself as mobile and self-transforming under the power of a rapidly expanding capitalism. Modernity, as the new generation perceived it, was conditioned less by stratification and class than by all-embracing consumerism...²⁹

The concept of selfhood expands and becomes more fluid around the turn of the century, even as the realm of production wanes in influence and "fantasies of power and mobility during the period are emblemized by adventures of consumerism."³⁰

The texts in this dissertation operate differently than the modernist genealogy that Levenson traces: both physical space (physis) and psychological space (psyche) are accessible to the narrating eye, but the omniscience is nevertheless compromised. In body-swap fiction, the reader cannot sustain a composite image of the character over the course of the narrative; in the feminist utopia of *Herland*, the reader struggles to see the male characters as both victims and victors of gender asymmetry; in Woolf's *Night and Day*, the reader cannot discern when a character works or stops working based on

²⁸ David Trotter. "The Modernist Novel." *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. (71)

²⁹ Peter Nicholls. *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*. (79)

³⁰ Ibid. (80)

physical cues. The narration in all cases is omniscient, but is still unable to capture character fully: the cognitive processes are too well concealed behind physical or contextual cues and thus are difficult to perceive. Moreover, I argue, this opacity is neither particularly psychological nor reliably associated with consumption per se.³¹ Identity may be fluid in important senses, but in these texts, the division of character has as much to do with problems of external observation, and particularly with the recognition of work or merit, as with interiority or with consumer enthrallment.

In my first chapter, I ask what body-swap fiction as a literary invention offers the turn-of-the-century transatlantic audience and postulate the following: that these texts provide a unique blending of fantasy and the everyday, combine a thought experiment with a study of embodiment, explore blind spots in social structures and systems, and describe how characters can be internally coherent but nonetheless divided from an external perspective. I further suggest that all of these features become culturally resonant around the turn of the century once professionals emerge as a more prominent segment of the workforce. I therefore agree with David Trotter's claim that the stratification of the middle class made expertise a more important and unstable form of symbolic capital. However, where Trotter suggests that securing the value of expertise created a market for paranoiac narratives that confer "a delusion of magical power" on the exceptional individual, I claim that body-swaps are more willing to accept social indifference and the utility of cultural adaptation. Body-swaps therefore share the "outsider's gift for seeing over-familiar realities in a fresh and unaccustomed way" that Jameson associates with utopias, while lacking what he describes as the need to "respond

³¹ Certainly, psychological effects may follow—characters experience distress, confusion, loss, anger, and distraction—but the divided self occurs at the external perspective first.

to specific dilemmas and offer to solve fundamental social problems to which the Utopian believes himself to hold the key.”³² The exceptionalism of the Utopian, who believes himself to be uniquely qualified to understand and influence a system, corresponds with Trotter’s analysis of Edwardian fantasies about professional power. Body-swaps operate in a different way: like utopias, they may combine the quotidian with the fantastic in order to reevaluate systems, but they are much more interested in the limitations of observation and individual agency. As a result, the authors of identity-exchange fiction can illuminate the blind spots and vulnerabilities of systems in a different fashion.

If professionals attempted to elevate the status of their work by accentuating their differences from the wider public, as Trotter suggests, then we must also acknowledge that some of their responsibilities required them to be embedded in the lives of others. They needed, for example, to study job fitness, work routines, the national diet, sanitation, health outcomes, and other aspects of the private sphere that were previously hidden. Even as professionals strove to establish their own credentials, they were actively involved in reassessing and sometimes even undermining the knowledge bases of their subordinates and the public more generally. Further, the dynamics of global financialization, where new trades were established and old firms were shuttered, could complicate these dynamics by making professional expertise outmoded or creating domestic unrest through job obsolescence. If professionals needed to develop associative communities and collaborate on methodology, they also had to be mindful about massive layoffs, internal competition, and widespread evidence of stagnation in economic

³² Frederic Jameson. *Archaeologies of the Future*. (11)

mobility. Some body-swaps literalize fears of downward mobility, either alarmingly or with gentle humor. In P. G. Wodehouse's *Laughing Gas*, after the adult man switches bodies with a child star, he laments that there is no ice cream at his house: "I ought to have told myself, I reflected, that you never know when you may be turned into a kid of twelve, and that, such an occurrence being always on the cards, it is simply loony not to have a little something handy in the ice-box."³³ As this quotation suggests, body-swaps can mitigate diffuse anxieties about social mobility in part because their operative conceit prevents the reader from becoming immersed in character in the way of other kinds of fiction. Narrative pleasure in these novels accretes around either the fantastical element of the transformation or the characters' attempts to mimic another person's routines in a way that gestures toward knowledge and techniques for its management.

If the texts of the first chapter train the reader to look beyond surface cues of embodiment in order to perceive concealed cognitive processes, then Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915), the subject of the second chapter, trains the reader to reverse-engineer the labor processes concealed in the world of objects. In *Herland*, expertise is established as symbolic capital inasmuch as the male characters bring their sociological, medical, and engineering training to assess Herland's fantastical all-female society. Gilman nevertheless reveals the insufficiencies of that expertise and models ways to refine their observational powers in order to strengthen that form of capital. I begin the second chapter by contending that although Gilman creates a feminist utopia around an unchallenged matriarchy, she partially authorizes a critique of that social totality, a

³³ P.G. Wodehouse. *Laughing Gas*. (80) "It came over me in a wave what a perfect ass I had been in my previous experience as Reginald, Lord Havershot, not have laid in a stock of these things against some possible emergency like this."

critique mounted by a trio of male explorers. Scholarship on the novel tends to claim either that Gilman's fictitious society offers a near-perfect idyll that upends the gender-based oppression she herself experienced *or* that its flaws are symptomatic of ideological limitations she could not perceive. Acknowledging that Gilman devises systemic solutions for the injustices that personally affected her, some critics have argued that her racist and nationalist agendas nevertheless prevented her from producing a truly utopian space. Although these claims are patently true, I contend that Gilman also intentionally builds certain flaws into her utopia that further illuminate the problems of marginalization under gender hierarchy. This is to say that Gilman develops an immanent critique of the utopia by partially validating the male characters' sense of unease in the society. Their discomfort reveals not only how entrenched a patriarchal mindset can be, but also the ongoing need for systemic reform, even in utopia.

Although Gilman invents a communal childcare system and a professional education system for women that she may have personally desired, she also designs her utopia around elements of personal experiences that she found to be limiting and restrictive. Notably, the novel revisits the same procedures and environs as the rest-cure that Gilman endured after a bout of post-partum depression. Other scholars have picked up on the resonances between *Herland* and "The Yellow Wall-paper," the iconic story about that devastating period of her life. But where Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar see *Herland* as an idealized world into which the unnamed narrator wishes to escape, I contend that the similarities between *Herland* and the confinement depicted in the short story affect how the utopia should be read. The physical description of setting in *Herland* closely mirrors the country estate in "The Yellow Wall-paper," while the male

characters are held captive for nine months in conditions that are too similar to the rest cure.³⁴ The male interlopers therefore become character-composites, representing both the victors and the victims of a gender-based hierarchy system, and their experiences affect how we interpret the utopia. As in body-swaps, we find characters not divided internally but nonetheless figured as amalgamations; and as in body-swaps, the dual-character construct is generative: it shows how knowledge can be precarious even as it reveals previously obscured labor.

This point is, in a sense, reflected in my own reading practice in this chapter: I produce a series of close analyses of even the subtlest traces of discomfort and unease in the novel. I scrutinize the arrest, imprisonment, escape, recapture, and exiling of the male characters, as well as the potential elements of dissatisfaction among the women of Herland. In so proceeding, I work against the prevalent criticism that Gilman's work is simply didactic, but I also mean to suggest that the threat of danger in the utopia requires the characters and, by extension, the reader to look for traces of labor where it is not immediately visible. The male characters draw on their sociological, medical, and engineering training to locate potential threats in Herland—including surveying the land and urban planning in order to determine what kind of workers build and maintain the fantastical world—while the Herlanders practice stealthier forms of analysis to contain the threat of the men.

Gilman shares with Virginia Woolf, whose *Night and Day* is the subject of my third chapter, a willingness to imagine structural reforms even though prevented by her gender from participating in administration at the highest levels. And both interrogate

³⁴ Sandra Gilbert and Sandra Gubar. *No Man's Land Vol. 2: Sexchanges*. (77)

systems and professions through their respective commitments to representing the experience of marginalization. Physically and emotionally debilitated by the rest cure, Gilman eventually used the experience as inspiration in inventing alternative structures and administrative systems built on feminist principles; Woolf drew on her recovery from mental and physical illness in order to reconceive the relationship between observing someone work and being observed at work. Woolf was closely monitored by her husband Leonard during the composition of *Night and Day*: he worried that writing was overtaxing her and thus only allowed her to work on the novel for an hour a day. And some of her experiences of being monitored while composing the text are included in the novel. The matron Mrs. Hilbery, for example, works on a biography of her father and adheres essentially to Leonard's same schedule; more broadly, all of the major characters are described when they are working on some project. In *Night and Day*, Woolf in effect develops a realist strategy for assessing a character's work performance but, in doing so, she discovers the tedium of describing and re-describing how signs of mental distraction register on the body. The character's mental life, Woolf suggests, is obscured by an administrative gaze in which the narrator clumsily presents the body again and again. If Gilman and the authors of body-swaps create composite characters, Woolf suggests that characters can be inaccessible because of insufficiencies of certain kinds of observation that have a managerial cast.

The inhabitants of Woolf's fiction have always created a lopsided economy, heavily populated by a professional class that includes failed novelists and successful poets, philosophers and university dons made insecure by limited insight, socialites who decorate the backgrounds of the other people's memories, colonial administrators and

businessmen nursing failed artistic ambitions, botanists and painters who see beauty they cannot fully possess, general practitioners and psychiatrists whose sense of “proportion” is lost, female teachers and playwrights whose masculinity undermines their work, and young men of less celebrated lineages who resent aspiring women. When she surveys the non-professional sector, Woolf also focuses on service providers: the caretaker who restores a seaside house after “time passes” or a fisherman who leads a long-postponed family excursion to the lighthouse. Her least successful and most traditional novel, *Night and Day*, does not depart from this pattern. All of the characters are somewhere in the middle class, and they are all aspiring professionals. They include the editor of a review, the daughter of a famous poet, a thwarted female mathematician, a government clerk, two law clerks, and three workers from a suffragette office.

I argue that, by directing attention to the working lives of the professional class, Woolf encounters a limit in realism. Realist literature can usefully supplement administrative objectives when the focus of attention is trained on setting and space: as Saikat Majumdar has recently argued, realism can serve bureaucratic ends by training the reader to keep stock of imagined inventory or by tracking vast catalogues of mimetic detail. Woolf, however, turns the omniscient realist gaze on characters that are working on ordinary tasks, in *Night and Day*, and in so doing confronts a repetitious tedium of description. By the beginning of her next and more experimental novel, *Jacob's Room*, Woolf does not find it necessary to describe how Betty Flanders looks when she sits at her desk; narrative attention does not need to establish her pose, her appearance, her

attitude or even what she is doing. Instead, Woolf describes what Flanders perceives.³⁵ I argue that, in the transition from her last traditional novel to her more experimental texts, Woolf discovers a method for assessing cognitive processes without directing the reader's attention back to the body or inward into the self. Her version of stream of consciousness offers a method of focalizing attention on everyday processes as they unfold without making the reader ever imagine herself under that same observation. The stream of consciousness in her work thus does not replicate the bureaucratic task (by observing a character at work) but supplements it (by engaging and developing the faculties of sustaining attention on tasks as they unfold).

One additional point bears noting before I close this introduction. The reader of the following chapters will note that the intersection between fantasy and the everyday is a constant throughout the dissertation. As a philosophical construct, "the everyday" is often at risk of irrelevance because it can be such an amorphous and capacious term. It is incongruously both the site of routinized activity and of helpless passivity; it encompasses the public sphere and the privacy of home, universal biological needs and increasingly homogenized desires, repetitive tasks and the rhythms of leisure. When critics engage with quotidian experience, they must include a caveat about the plasticity and insufficiency of the concept, as exemplified by Ben Highmore's claim that "the everyday offers itself up as a problem, a contradiction, a paradox."³⁶ Even in an early theorization of the term, in his *Critique of Everyday Life*, Henri Lefebvre anticipates seven potential objections, which can be organized into three categories of problem: 1)

³⁵ "Slowly welling from the point of her gold nib, pale blue ink dissolved the full stop; for there her pen stuck; her eyes fixed, and tears slowly filled them. The entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled..." Virginia Woolf. *Jacob's Room* (1)

³⁶ Ben Highmore. *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. (16)

the everyday is only meaningful as background to or symptomatic of historical events; 2) without an appeal to transcendence, the everyday falls prey to vulgar materialism or the inauthentic experiences that philosophy aims to surpass; and finally 3) without systemization, the concept lacks empirical analysis or an account of class difference. Lefebvre's subsequent analysis, especially in refuting the first objection, has strengthened cultural studies, but doubts about the efficacy of the term still persist. Critics have attempted to correct for the biases of gender, culture, class, religion, temporal rhythm, and mode of perception in early formulations of the concept. There have been renewed emphases on socially reproductive labors, the exoticization of the ordinary, the distinctive rituals of spiritual life, the affective experiences of boredom and distraction, and all manner of historicization. But even with these inclusions and expansions, the everyday can still be a theoretical morass.

The everyday has a particularly vexed relationship when it comes to literature: Lefebvre argues that the everyday only became a phenomenon once it was an object for artistic representation in the nineteenth century, while Rita Felski claims that modernist novels threaten to extinguish it because "this act of magnifying and refracting taken-for-granted minutiae transcends the very dailiness it seeks to depict."³⁷ Other scholars suggest that writing about quotidian experience can serve as a numbing agent, a salve, or both for the reader. Franco Moretti contends that literary representation attempts to capture and tame the quotidian because literary pleasure emerges "from the perception of a form that reduces and 'binds' the tensions and disequilibrium of everyday experience.

³⁷ Rita Felski. "The Invention of Everyday Life." *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture*. (90) I find Felski's position to be difficult to maintain because it renders the concept almost entirely inaccessible by literature, by philosophy, or even by most methods of apprehension.

What makes literature symbolically necessary is precisely its capacity to mediate and compromise— to teach us how to ‘live with’ disturbing phenomena.”³⁸ According to Liesl Olson, though, the reader of modernist literature seeks solace in the everyday, a means of rejecting “what is represented as the hollowness of modern life, the loss of abstract ideals in which to believe, and the difficulty of really knowing another person.”³⁹ Despite the conceptual weaknesses of the term, scholars keep returning to the everyday in order to describe both the conditions for and the impasses to social transformation. At the heart of any theory of justice, Amartya Sen claims there must be an account of “remediable injustices,” which are “evident enough in our day-to day life, with inequities or subjugations from which we may suffer and which we have good reason to resent,” because this is what prompts moral feeling and action.⁴⁰ Michel de Certeau contends that the everyday conceals sites of political resistance and, for Felski, daily life contains “democratic” potential “because it recognizes the shared reality of a mundane material embeddness in the world. Everyone, from the most famous to the most humble, eats, sleeps, yawns, defecates; no one escapes the reach of the quotidian”⁴¹ Lefebvre originally theorized that political resistance could emerge from a recognition that the social classes are not merely antagonistic factions, but participants and creators of the same society with the same basic needs. As he writes, “it could be that an eventual and certainly *possible* social transformation might come from the pressure brought by needs more than by absolute poverty, want and pauperization.”⁴² In addition, the everyday can

³⁸ Franco Moretti. *Maps, Graphs, Trees*. (160)

³⁹ Liesl Olson. *Modernism and the Ordinary*. (5)

⁴⁰ Amartya Sen. *The Idea of Justice*. (vii)

⁴¹ Rita Felski. “The Invention of Everyday Life.” *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture*. (79)

⁴² Henri Lefebvre. *Critique of Everyday Life: Vol. 2*. (32)

be used to explain how the dynamics of modern power emerge not only through disciplinary institutions but also through the administration of ordinary life, as Eric Caydyn writes: “The private spaces of personal autonomy (our homes, our dreams, our bodies) are where the real work of power is done, so much so that by the time we arrive at our offices or schools no one needs to tell us to do the right thing.”⁴³ My dissertation examines how these three spaces of privacy and personal autonomy—homes, dreams, bodies—are affected and interrupted by the everyday regulation of work. Each chapter, in fact, corresponds with one of the categories: Gilman’s utopia extends the socially reproductive labors of the home to the boundaries of a nation, Woolf explores the monitoring of dreamlife at work, and identity exchange fiction explores how embodied experience can be structured by external observation. In experimenting with fantasy and the everyday, these writers were able to recuperate invisible labors made vulnerable by abstract global financialization. In experimenting with fantasy and the everyday, these writers were able to recuperate invisible labors, and in this to probe in new ways life’s ordinary administering, where the real work of power is done.

⁴³ Eric Cazdyn. *The Already Dead: The New Time of Politics, Culture, and Illness*. (42)

Chapter One: Managing Character in Body-Swap Fiction, 1885-1936

An orphaned protagonist, a chance meeting with a wealthy benefactor in the streets of London, and the promise of an inheritance that will lead to the young man's advancement—these well-worn plot points suggest that H. G. Wells's "The Late Mr. Elvisham" (1903) could be classified as an upward mobility story, and indeed one that minimizes ambivalence about its main character's rise. Edward George Eden, like many socially mobile characters before him, is granted what Bruce Robbins, in his analysis of mobility narratives, calls the "gift of minimal prior attachment."⁴⁴ In other words, Eden need not contend with the narrative complications or the dilemmas of class solidarity that family and friends might pose. His lack of attachments, in fact, is almost comically exaggerated: orphaned at age five, Eden is raised by a bachelor uncle whose "posthumous generosity"⁴⁵ allows him to attend medical school in unfamiliar London, where he forgoes relationships in order to devote himself to his studies. Eden, moreover, has no prior connections to the wealthy philosopher Egbert Elvisham, whom he meets one afternoon en route to getting his shoes mended. This also conforms to a pattern Robbins has isolated, where patrons "are not linked to the young men they befriend by prior bonds of familial, class, institutional, or even neighborhood solidarity" and thus are not impelled to intercede for those reasons.⁴⁶ Instead, "the scene of self-presentation to the

⁴⁴ Bruce Robbins. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good*. (67)

⁴⁵ H. G. Wells. "The story of the Late Mr. Elvisham." *The Plattner Story and Others*. (47).

⁴⁶ Bruce Robbins. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good*. (68) Robbins specifically references the encounters on the streets of New York in Horatio Alger's fiction, but he also alludes to a wider range of texts. For Robbins, the "friendly bond" between protagonist and patron foregrounds how the system of economic asymmetry is determined by human actors rather than impersonal forces; it also demonstrates how the patron's unspecified, but potentially erotic desires, reveal the vulnerabilities of power. By setting such an encounter in the anonymity of the streets, further, this kind of story meditates on the problem of poverty and offers strategies for intervention. In Alger's fiction, the protagonist secures the benefactor's patronage by performing feats of athleticism and articulating his entrepreneurial aspirations; the character

potential benefactor,” Robbins writes, “seems to be the actual site where something like genuine ‘merit’ is displayed, merit that fiction does not often display in ordinary wage-earning labor.”⁴⁷ Once again, the principle is perhaps amplified in Wells’s story: when Egbert Elvesham confides that he intends to choose “some young fellow, ambitious, pure-minded, and poor, healthy in body and healthy in mind”⁴⁸ to be heir to his fortune, he explains that the candidate must first pass a battery of exams.⁴⁹ Merit, in this story, must be authenticated and tested in a more formal setting.

Told in retrospective narration after Eden has secured a position of privilege, the story should perform the standard ideological work of the genre by demonstrating how one man’s effort is compensated with wealth and status. By the conclusion, however, Wells has granted the protagonist riches but inverted all of the other tropes of upward mobility fiction: Eden sees his benefactor as his enemy, understands that his ambitions have made him vulnerable to exploitation, and realizes that he is paralyzed in his new social position. Further, Wells does not idealize Eden’s self-reliance: his abstinence from social pleasures, required as a condition for the inheritance, attests not to his vocational dedication, as Eden assumes, but to his lack of advocates. Rewarded with improved

presumably wins the *reader’s* approval by redistributing his funds to other boys in the neighborhood and thus modeling for the reader the potential pleasures of allocating funds to social causes. Robbins’s argument is persuasive, but in shifting to the boy’s generosity, it deemphasizes the bond between patron and boy, or what he initially describes as “the true ideological message of the plot.” Wells, in contrast, maintains focus on that relationship and suggests a more exploitative reading.

⁴⁷ Bruce Robbins. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good*. (70)

⁴⁸ H.G.Wells. “The story of the Late Mr. Elvesham.” *The Plattner Story and Others*. (50) Elvesham then details how the young man’s health history will be determined by a thorough accounting of his personal history: “...I must go into all the circumstances of his life before I can accept him. He *must* be sound. I must know his heredity, how his parents and grandparents died, have the strictest inquiries made into his private morals.” In other words, his merit will be determined in part by his social emplacement and his class status.

⁴⁹ A very different but evocative meditation on how personal history intersects with and informs economic advancement can be found in Annie McClanahan’s article about the evolving American credit score methodology in “Bad Credit: The Character of Credit Scoring” *Representations* (31). See also, Michael Szalay’s “Wallace Stevens and the Invention of Social Security” in *Modernism/modernity* (49-74)

material conditions, he is no longer consumed by the demands of his medical career but is still restless in his new socioeconomic position. Nearing death, Eden is keenly aware of the sumptuous fabric covering his windows and walls, of the delicate veins of marble running through his mantelpiece, and of bedchambers “better furnished than any room [he] had ever slept in before.”⁵⁰ But his appreciation is alloyed with profound estrangement from those surroundings and eventually he commits suicide, ensuring that there will be no further reversals of fortune. Some different principle is at work in this story.

The foregoing synopsis omits three elements: an off-stage period of deliberation, a dinner, and a single night’s sleep. After inquiring into the young man’s health history and biography, Elvisham deliberates for an undisclosed but presumably extended period of time. Meanwhile, Eden seems to have forgotten about the offer to be Elvisham’s beneficiary and is busily “cramming chemical equations for [his] Preliminary Scientific examination”⁵¹ when Elvisham invites him to a late-night dinner. Preoccupied by his upcoming test, Eden becomes even more distracted at the restaurant once he becomes uncomfortably aware of the waiter’s appraisal of his “rough clothes,” and he compensates by drinking champagne.⁵² Once Eden is fully inebriated, Elvisham makes his proposal: “there are conditions, of course, burdens to be imposed. [The beneficiary] must, for instance, take my name. You cannot expect everything without some return.”⁵³ After securing Eden’s agreement, Elvisham tests the limits of the young man’s consent by

⁵⁰ H.G.Wells. “The story of the Late Mr. Elvisham.” *The Plattner Story and Others*. (70)

⁵¹ Ibid. (51-52)

⁵² Ibid. (52) “He watched me drink and eat with a touch of envy. ‘What a capacity for living you have!’” (53)

⁵³ Ibid. (50)

countering: “You will not perhaps mind taking my name, taking my position, but would you indeed—willingly—take my years?”⁵⁴ Eden affirms that he would, if he could also lay claim to the older man’s accomplishments. Finalizing the details of the bequest over the sumptuous feast, the philosopher coaxes Eden to drink one final liqueur that induces strange and unsettling visions. After a deep sleep, Eden awakens in an unfamiliar country manor and discovers that his consciousness is imprisoned in the philosopher’s weak and ailing body. Presumed senile, Eden cannot convince the household staff of the magical transformation and, unable to escape the house unassisted, he eventually ingests poison in order to be released from crippling physical pain.

More than an ambivalent tale of one man’s social ascent, “The Late Mr. Elvesham” is also a narrative in which two characters trade bodies and socioeconomic positions. In this chapter, I will situate the story among more than a score of identity exchange narratives published between 1885 and 1931 by British and American authors, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H. P. Lovecraft, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Walter Besant, and P.G. Wodehouse. Body-swap fiction is largely neglected by critics and, in fact, I am the first to examine the plot device systematically.⁵⁵ Given the diversity of social problems and experiences represented in the format, there are serious challenges to analyzing the plot device in this way; indeed one of the difficulties of this comparative study of transatlantic body-swaps is that the works under consideration *are* so dissimilar.

⁵⁴ Ibid. (53) The comment is reminiscent of Kathi Weeks reminder “that individuals should work is fundamental to the basic social contract.”

⁵⁵ As there is very little scholarship on the subject, I have attempted to track down as many sources and authors as possible; however, there may very well be omissions and my list is by no means exhaustive. For the purposes of this study, I will largely exclude plays and films from my analysis. The playwright confronts a different set of problems in terms of character identification (both in terms of securing a sense of character identity, as well as cluing the audience into which character should be “visible”) and how to render the body-swap experience. Prose writers, for example, must labor to remind the audience that one character is in another’s body, while the playwright can depend on props or dialect associations.

The authors included in this project, for example, hold a variety of different political commitments—from those of the noted socialist Walter Besant to those of the conservative candidate Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—and write in generic styles that range from comedy to horror to adventure; the mood, tone, and theme of the texts are different. Yet, certain features recur at the level of both content and form.

We can begin with the point that “The Late Mr. Elvisham,” like other body-swaps, indexes a concern that knowledge will not be properly evaluated and that such errors of judgment can impact social mobility. Unlike ancient myths that depict humans imprisoned in the bodies of animals or folk tales that describe people making pacts with demons or angels, body-swaps feature two characters who trade places within the same socioeconomic hierarchy—a development that is only possible once certain trajectories of social mobility have become familiar to the reading public. Thus, one context in which to situate these texts is the transatlantic stratification of the middle classes and, more specifically, the rise of English professional culture at the turn of the century. As detailed in the next section, the convergence of two separate but related economic features of this period is essential to any account of professionals and their influence: first, anxieties about knowledge as capital were not limited to the professional class; second, professionals’ rise to cultural prominence occurred during a period marked by volatile market fluctuations. Knowledge assessment was thus becoming more essential for determining social mobility at a time when the economy was becoming more unpredictable. And by intimating that class identity is contingent and exploring fears of professional erasure, body-swaps express anxieties about this phenomenon even as they offer wish fulfillment fantasies. Further, the dual-character construct, in which a

character's interiority no longer corresponds with her physiognomy, necessarily disrupts those genres of fiction that focus on the development of a stable identity or recognition of individual merit: the bildungsroman, narratives of courtship and marriage, and stories of upward mobility dependent on personal effort.

Yet if body-swaps reference anxiety about the knowledge economy at the level of content and genre, they compensate by providing pleasures experienced by the character (tactile, sensory, or bodily) as well as textual pleasures for the reader. And they mute anxiety in another way: even though these texts can literalize fears about economic backsliding, the reader is prevented from identifying too closely with a character because the plot device itself contains an inherent distancing mechanism. Initially, an author may render a character's metamorphosis vividly: in *Turnabout*, "Tim was treated to the unnerving experience of seeing his own body wringing its hands"⁵⁶; in *An Exchange of Souls*, Dr. Daniel Myas sees "huddled in a chair close to me, my own dead body" and turns to see "from the mirror the face of Alice Lade look[ing] back at [him]"⁵⁷; in *The Ealing Miracle*, Olive Teversham-Dingle sees an "accentuation of emotion she recognised as having been part and parcel of her own individuality."⁵⁸ Such an effect is difficult to maintain as the narrative progresses, however, and the writer must continually remind the reader that the character is a composite. At the denouement of *Vice Versa*, for example, F. Anstey smuggles this metatextual problem into the narrative proper, when the character Paul Bultitude wonders whether he can convince his friends to realize that he has traded bodies with his son: "Perhaps he overrated the power of his pen—perhaps it

⁵⁶ Thorne Smith. *Turnabout*. (71)

⁵⁷ Barry Pain. *An Exchange of Souls*. (69)

⁵⁸ Horace W. C. Newte. *The Ealing Miracle*. (41)

would have required more than mere ink to persuade his friends to disbelieve their own senses, and see a portly citizen of over fifty packed into the frame of a chubby urchin of fourteen.”⁵⁹ The quote demonstrates how body-swaps are half thought-experiment and half exploration of embodiment, how in them sensory experience can be more completely rendered *and* less acute or immediate.⁶⁰

If “The Late Mr. Elvisham” is principally a cautionary tale about an aspiring doctor who is not properly compensated for his dedication to the medical profession, then we must ask what the story cautions readers against. One possibility might be that the upwardly mobile protagonist is punished because he expects financial reward without doing the requisite work, but that does not seem applicable here: not only does Eden sacrifice friendships and love for his career, but he also continues to work toward his professional goals even after Elvisham offers the inheritance. It is moreover implied that he becomes susceptible to Elvisham’s deception because he is so preoccupied by his professional exams. Perhaps then, the problem is that Eden is too ambitious or too calculating. There is certainly more evidence to support this reading: when he initially meets the philosopher, Eden is wary of a “confidence trick” and is “on alert for the vestiges of [his] five hundred pounds.”⁶¹ Then when he learns about the inheritance, he assumes the role of the dissembler and, “[he] tried to seem disinterested. With a transparent hypocrisy, [he] said, ‘And you want my help, my professional services, maybe to find that person?’”⁶² Eden’s minor deceit perhaps could be considered a

⁵⁹ F. Anstey. *Vice Versa*. (187)

⁶⁰ As Pericles Lewis writes in an survey of modernism, “one means of achieving distance without remoteness is for the novelist to redirect a reader to the pleasure of design.” *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*. (42)

⁶¹ H.G. Wells. “The story of the Late Mr. Elvisham.” *The Plattner Story and Others*. (50)

⁶² Ibid. (50)

character flaw—except that it conforms to a practice Karen Haltunen has noted in “success literature” after 1870, where readers are encouraged to adopt “the arts of the confidence man.”⁶³ In her survey of sources that include upward mobility fiction as well as advice manuals, Haltunen describes the shift in these terms: “whereas antebellum advice literature had cautioned young men never to cultivate outward appearances at the expense of inner realities, postbellum success manuals advised their readers about how to manipulate appearances to his own advantage.”⁶⁴ The story perhaps suggests that, even though Eden is properly ambitious, he is unable to navigate the system of appearances successfully: he is unable to maintain his own façade (speaking with “transparent hypocrisy”⁶⁵) and he is also unable to uncover Elvisham’s ulterior motives.⁶⁶

Thus framed, the story merely illustrates a pattern found in much transatlantic mass-market fiction, where anxieties about assessing others are correlated with concerns about social mobility. Body-swaps, however, register these concerns at the level of content and at the level of form. Further reflection indeed suggests that the crisis at the heart of “The Late Mr. Elvisham” is that Eden does not properly evaluate Elvisham: “It seemed incredible to me that this man, whose intelligence had so early dominated mine, this great abstraction, should suddenly realize itself as this decrepit, familiar figure.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Karen Haltunen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle Class Culture in America, 1830-1870*. (198)

⁶⁴ Haltunen technically describes an American practice, but her sources suggest a wider transatlantic audience. (204)

⁶⁵ This aspect is important because Elvisham understands that he is hypocritical and Eden “laughed at his quiet exposure of my modest pretence.” (*sic.*) H.G. Wells. “The story of the Late Mr. Elvisham.” *The Plattner Story and Others*. (51)

⁶⁶ “My imagination was dancing wildly, my innate skepticism was useless to modify its transports.” *Ibid.* (51) More specifically, Eden does not understand Elvisham’s true motives because he is too preoccupied by his class origins (his “rough clothes” at dinner) and by his class aspirations (his apprehensions about his exams).

⁶⁷ H.G. Wells. “The story of the Late Mr. Elvisham.” *The Plattner Story and Others* (52-53)

Eden focuses on the wrong signals—taking particular physical cues as signs of vulnerability—and thus feels the least threatened by Elvisham’s intelligence just when he is most in danger of being “dominated” by it.⁶⁸ Again, however, the problem of evaluation is not merely expressed at the level of content. The body-swap conceit requires the protagonist to become a composite figure whose internal cognitive processes are separated from surface cues and other phenomena traditionally used to establish character. This dissonance is perhaps most evident when Eden speaks aloud: “*And the voice was not my own....It was not my own, it was thin, the articulation was slurred, the resonance of my facial bones was different.*”⁶⁹ Eden’s consciousness remains constant, but his voice and facial structure are transformed.

At this point in the text, the problem of assessment shifts to two different registers: Eden tries to convince other characters that he is not an old man, while Wells must persuade the reader to continue to see him as an old man. In the former scenario, Eden scrambles to convince the household staff that he is actually an aspiring medical student, but is dismissed because “Elvisham was, of course, a profound student of mental science, and all my declarations of the facts of the case merely confirm the theory that my insanity is the outcome of overmuch brooding upon psychology.”⁷⁰ If Eden has difficulty convincing other characters of his true identity, then Wells faces the opposite problem, in that he needs to work against the reader’s inclination to collapse the divided character-construct and become immersed in the character’s experience in a way that leads to a

⁶⁸ By the end of the story, the point is made explicit because Eden echoes the phrase: “Every moment I was beginning to realize the immense intelligence of the plans of my enemy, to see more and more clearly the hopelessness of my position.” Ibid. (67)

⁶⁹ Ibid. (original emphasis, 62)

⁷⁰ Ibid. (69)

forgetting of the problem of the new body. The writerly challenge is voiced by Eden, who directly addresses the reader to remind her of the imaginative construct: “You who are mind and body together, at your natural years, cannot imagine what this fiendish imprisonment meant to me.”⁷¹

Yet for all the horror and abjection attendant on the swap, Wells also builds textual pleasures into the scenes of alienation and exploitation he describes. If Wells minimizes ambivalence about Eden’s upward mobility *and* creates a mood of abjection when those hopes are crushed, then why does he also build in textual pleasures around the scenes of alienation and exploitation? In order to highlight how wonder and delight are prominently featured in scenes of dread, I will examine in some detail the extended transformation scene and its immediate aftermath—beginning with the moment when the two men agree to the terms of inheritance at dinner and concluding the next morning. To celebrate the contract negotiation, the already intoxicated Eden accepts one final drink from Elvesham, which he suspects is laced with opium.⁷² The offer is described in neutral terms, but retrospectively it emerges as pivotal: the draught of “liquid folly,” as Eden calls it, facilitates the exchange between the two men.⁷³ Eden begins to feel the

⁷¹ Ibid. (64) Wells is not alone in confronting the challenge of sustaining such an imaginative construct. The husband who trades bodies with his wife in *Turnabout* has a conversation about his masculine femininity: “‘But seemingly you’re not a man,’ the woman replied. ‘It’s sort of a yes-and-no proposition...I don’t function like a man.’” (T, 213); A wealthy woman trades with a working woman in *The Ealing Miracle* and begins to forget her identity: “Should her thoughts incline to her fat Ealing days, it appeared as if she had been born to her present hard lot” (TEM, 160); an English bachelor in *An Exchange of Souls* meets with his friend (a doctor who switches with his wife): “There was a direct plea for help. Whether it came from a man or woman, it came from a friend of mined, and to disregard it would have been to lose my most precious possession, my self-respect. (EoS, 74)

⁷² Evidence of The Great Binge, in which narcotic use became so naturalized that Harrods department store sold kits of heroin to send to the troops during World War I, can be found in the pink and white powders scattered across the stories, if not in the fantastical aspects of the form itself. A boozy haze of “Delirium Tremninses” (*Vice Versa*), glasses of port, flutes of champagne, a “snootful” of an unnamed cocktail (*Laughing Gas*), and a combination of “vile libations” (*Turnabout*) so strong that the imbiber is presumed dead, saturates these stories and perhaps facilitates the sense of unreality that undergirds them.

⁷³ H.G. Wells. “The Late Mr. Elvesham.” *The Plattner Story* (57)

effects on his walk home, becoming overwhelmed by two different sets of perceptions competing with one another, “as if the picture of my present sensations was painted over some other picture that was trying to show through.”⁷⁴ The narrative lingers over the tumult of his senses as Eden struggles to capture the feeling: “...still with an absurd feeling of minute distinctness, as though—how can I express it?—I not only saw but *felt* through an inverted opera-glass.”⁷⁵ Eden never specifies precisely what happens, but we can assume that his mind is overcome by images and memories that belong to Elevesham. For instance, he sees the tonier districts of Elvesham’s commute spliced into the terrain of his own familiar neighborhood. Eden is dazzled, when Regent Street transforms into Waterloo Station and then switches back again: “How can I express it? You see a skillful actor looking quietly at you, he pulls a grimace and lo!—another person. Is it too extravagant if I tell you that it seemed to me as if Regent Street had, for the moment done that?”⁷⁶

The “mental doubling,” as Eden eventually labels it, is not confined to the visual plane but engages all his senses.⁷⁷ During his stroll through darkened London streets, he feels the crispness of the night air and, simultaneously, the rush to get to a crowded platform at Waterloo Station. At the same time that he is walking, he feels his legs buckle and settle into a seat on the train. Although he is an only child who is in his twenties, he grows distraught at the memory of an argument with a long-estranged

⁷⁴ Ibid. (58)

⁷⁵ Ibid. (55)

⁷⁶ Ibid. (56) It could also be argued that the mental doubling undermines the desirability of upward mobility by impoverishing its goal of moving to a better neighborhood. The two geographical spaces, which are delineated by class markers, are overlaid in this passage, collapsing the separation between the two neighborhoods. Eden’s desire for a better living situation is emptied out, when the relative proximity of both places is revealed.

⁷⁷ Ibid. (56)

brother that happened thirty years prior.⁷⁸ And he is arrested by other phantom memories: “I began to recall vanished shops, and to compare the street to what it used to be.”⁷⁹ Near the end of his journey, Eden senses that another mind is crowding out his own: “Do they still show children dissolving views? In those I remember one view would begin like a faint ghost, and grow and oust another. In just that way it seemed to me that a ghostly set of new sensations was struggling with those of my ordinary self.”⁸⁰ The stakes of the scene are high for Eden, but his experience of a contest of wills is not described in terms of terror.

Moreover, even as Elvisham struggles to supplant Eden, the older man seems almost pitiable in the scene: not only his bereavement over his lost brother but also a certain fear bleeds into Eden’s experience. Approaching the house, Eden forgets his apartment number and becomes “puzzled, and a little frightened, and scarcely noticed the unusual way [he] was taking.”⁸¹ On a second reading, it is clear that Elvisham already has some command over the younger man’s body,⁸² which is to say that there is a palimpsestic image of a frail elderly man lost and “a little frightened” in an unfamiliar neighborhood. The early flashes of Elvisham’s experience—his weariness at the train station, his argument with his brother, his nostalgia about the past, his disorientation in Eden’s neighborhood—are not incidental, since they encourage an extension of sympathy

⁷⁸ “Then, being persuaded it was Regent Street again, I was oddly muddled about some fantastic reminiscences that cropped up. ‘Thirty years ago,’ thought I, ‘it was here that I quarreled with my brother.’ Then I burst out laughing, to the astonishment and encouragement of a group of night prowlers.” Ibid. (56)

⁷⁹ Ibid. (57)

⁸⁰ Ibid. (57)

⁸¹ Ibid.(58)

⁸² We know this because Eden cannot imagine him: “I tried to steady my mind by recalling the incidents of the dinner, and for the life of me I could conjure up no picture of my host’s face; I saw him only as a shadowy outline, as one might see oneself reflected in a window through which one was looking. In his place, however, I had a curious exterior vision of myself sitting at a table, flushed, bright-eyed, and talkative.” Ibid.(58)

to him even as he is revealed to be the villain of the tale. In other words, Wells de-emphasizes the sinister aspects of the transformation in two ways: he humanizes Elvisham and he evokes the pleasures of various pastimes to describe the transformation: “an inverted opera-glass,” “a picture painted over some other picture,” “a skillful actor,” and “dissolving views.” By indulging in the imaginative play of these scenes, Wells to some extent suspends investment in either character alone or even the ethical stakes of the scene. In overlaying images of city streets from different eras and exploring the sensory pleasures afforded by the transformation, Wells generates a diffuse curiosity that is not tied to either character alone.

Once Eden awakes in the philosopher’s house, he takes stock of his transformed body and lingers over signs of the older man’s fragility:

He had already seemed physically weak and pitiful to me, but seen now, dressed only in a coarse flannel nightdress that fell apart and showed the stringy neck, seen now as my own body, I cannot describe its desolate decrepitude. The hollow cheeks, the straggling tail of dirty grey hair, the rheumy bleared eyes, the quivering, shriveled lips, the lower displaying a gleam of the pink interior lining and those horrible dark gums showing. You who are mind and body together, at your natural years, cannot imagine what this fiendish imprisonment meant to me. To be young and full of the desire and energy of youth, and to be caught and presently to be crushed in this tottering ruin of a body...⁸³

There is a clear line of horror and disgust running through the inventory of Elvisham’s infirmities, from the “straggling tail of dirty grey hair” to the “rheumy bleared eyes” to the “horrible dark gums.” One might say that the charged descriptors reinforce how Eden incorrectly perceived a “weak and pitiable” man where he should have seen a threat. But by intensifying the older man’s vulnerabilities, Wells more subtly suggests that Eden’s initial reaction was insufficiently observed and that he did not pity the older man enough.

⁸³ Ibid. (64)

After the transformation, Eden comprehends the philosopher's vulnerability better because it is more objectively exposed than before ("seen now, dressed only in a flannel nightdress") and because it is "seen now as [his] own body." His pity grows with greater study of the precise contours of the older man's frailties because he is more personally invested in that man's case. And at the moment that readerly sympathy should attach to Eden, the reader is aware of her own inattention to Elvisham's earlier claim to that same sympathy.

The transformation of Eden-Elvisham indexes how body swap fiction problematizes the distribution of narrative attention in a very particular and striking way. Minor characters in novels have the potential to destabilize the narrative, according to Alex Woloch, because their presence signals how the plot could be organized around their drives and desires, their consciousness and experience. "The Late Mr. Elvisham" literalizes this possibility by dramatically shifting attention to the body and to some extent the consciousness of a previously minor character—to Elvisham's memories and experience of crippling physical pain.⁸⁴

Woloch has persuasively argued that the flatness of minor characters reflects the process of specialization under the capitalism of industrialization:

In fact, the division of labor, so central to nineteenth-century social and economic theory, is also the social process most profoundly implicated in the character-systems of nineteenth-century fiction. The importance of flat characters to the modern novel, which E. M. Forster so shrewdly places at the center of characterization, becomes consolidated at the same time that numerous disciplines conceptualize and confront the problem of specialization, the radical delimitation of human activity—and even human agency—to ever more narrow, and segmented parameters.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ It should be noted that many of the texts in this analysis do follow both characters.

⁸⁵ Alex Woloch. *One Vs. the Many*. (156)

By this, Woloch does not mean that the effects of specialization are necessarily literally evident in characterization, as though a minor character would be physically marked or shaped by his repetitive work on a discrete task.⁸⁶ Woloch suggests rather that the specialization can inform how minor characters are reflected through the consciousness of the protagonist. He argues that, minor characters in Dickensian fiction, identifiable by verbal or visual ties, signify an entrenched social stratification that can only afford glimpses of character surfaces: “This privileging of the ‘half-visible,’ ‘fixed,’ or ‘concrete’ appearance is linked to the hardening of minor characters as always already flat, or specialized.”⁸⁷ In “The Late Mr. Elevesham,” privileging surface appearances leads Eden to misread the older man’s character, and to see him primarily as a conduit for his upward mobility. Elvesham’s partial visibility at the start of the narrative is not “fixed,” however, because Eden is unable to ignore the older man’s claims on his attention after the swap. Uncovering the processes, concealed beneath surface appearance of the minor character, is underscored in a brief vignette following the transformation. On hearing his own now-altered voice, Eden notes, “a thought struck me, and I went back to the bedroom and put in the set of false teeth. They slipped in with the ease of old habit.”⁸⁸ Eden’s scrutiny of the older man’s “hollow cheeks” and exposed “horrible dark gums” do not convince him to put in dentures; instead, Eden must think through the processes that guide the older man’s life in order to solve the problem.

⁸⁶ However, the problems of specialization shaping a character’s psyche is available in Wells’s story: “Elvesham was, of course, a profound student of mental science, and all my declarations of the facts of the case merely confirm the theory that my insanity is the outcome of overmuch brooding upon psychology.” H. G. Wells. “The Late Mr. Elevesham.” *The Plattner Story and Others*. (68)

⁸⁷ Alex Woloch. *One Vs. the Many*. (159)

⁸⁸ H. G. Wells. “The Late Mr. Elevesham.” *The Plattner Story and Others*. (66)

The two phenomena of body-swap narratives just described—the pleasures of “mental doubling” and the transfer of readerly sympathy—are thus intertwined. Woloch claims that human experience, delimited by specialization, can be represented by foregrounding the protagonist at the expense of the minor character. By contrast, Wells suggests that these narratological effects can be mitigated by the imaginative play in the transformation scene: when the two distinct experiences of physical embodiment are overlaid, Wells conveys a sense of enjoyment in both men’s feelings. Perhaps then we can consider whether “The Late Mr. Elvesham,” and body-swaps more generally, present a different approach to the division of labor, where there is something to be gained in studying specialized experience. “The Late Mr. Elvesham,” and body-swaps more generally, thus seem to present a different approach to the division of labor and the possible gains of studying specialized experience. Wells’s tale initially appears to be an upward mobility story that deprives the protagonist of his reward, but the body-swap conceit enables the reader to be less invested in the individual character’s success, more empathetic with a figure burdened by the experience of a compromised body, and more curious about both trajectories. In the next section, I will suggest some possible reasons why such a literary form might have held appeal around the turn of the twentieth century.

Body-swaps in Context

The long history of identity exchange stretches back centuries, as Walter Besant explicitly notes in *The Doubts of Dives* (1889). Situating his text within a broader cultural practice, Besant cites the historical sources and global narratives that serve as precedents for his experiment:

This exchange is no new thing. It is, on the other hand, quite a common thing—we read of it everywhere. The incantations of Circe are founded on this secret. By means of the great Afreet Sakhr conveyed the soul of King Solomon, for three days, into the body of a kitchen scullion. Thus was Lucius transformed into an Ass: thus King Robert of Sicily was made a beggar. Nay even parts of men have been sold or exchanged. Thus are the cases of Peter Schlemil, who sold his shadow: of Luke Lucraft, who sold his appetite: of Dr. Jekyll, who changed his outward appearance: Thackery's Bacon...not to speak of Bultitude and the Boy.⁸⁹

Arranged chronologically, the sources demonstrate that the conceit has been employed in ancient Rome and Mesopotamia, sixteenth-century Italy and England, and nineteenth-century Germany, America, and England.⁹⁰ As useful as Besant's list is, however, it actually serves to highlight the relative novelty of the exchange his character wishes to attempt. Exempting *Arabian Nights*, these stories do not depict exchanges between humans. Circe transforms men into beasts for her pleasure; Lucius's picaresque adventures occur when he is turned into a donkey; Longfellow's king learns how to rule when an angel takes his place on the throne; and the other stories involve men selling parts of themselves. By no means exhausting the potential genealogy for identity exchange fiction, Besant's list could be broadened to include stories about doubles, reincarnation, men who trade clothes, and, as Caroline Hunt contends in her brief article on identity exchange fiction, country-house mysteries in which a character steals the

⁸⁹ Walter Besant. *The Doubts of Dives*. (15)

⁹⁰ *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius (Ancient Rome, date unknown—either in the 150's or 180's AD), *Arabian Nights* (traced to multiple regions and dates, the earliest of which is circa 800 AD), *Cantus Circaeus* by Giordano Bruno (Italy, 1582), *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* by Robert Green (England, possible dates 1588-92), "Peter Schlemihl's Remarkable Story" by Adelbert von Chamisso (Germany, 1814), "The Sicilian's Tale; King Robert of Sicily" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (from *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, America, 1863), *Vice Versa* by F. Anstey (England, 1882), "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson (England, 1886), "The Case of Mr. Lucraft" by Walter Besant (England, 1888) I would be remiss if it did not acknowledge that, as Besant's language is oblique, the author may have intended different sources than those I have found.

identity of the dead.⁹¹ The aforementioned list also excludes philosophical antecedents, notably John Locke's foundational theory of the constituent parts of identity: "For should the soul of a prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the prince's past life, enter and inform the body of a cobbler, as soon as deserted by his own soul, every one sees he would be the same *person* with the prince, accountable only for the prince's actions: but who would say it was the same *man*?"⁹²

What differentiates *The Doubts of Dives* and other period body-swap texts from their literary precursors is the focus on exchanging two human lives and the narrative consequences such a transformation would entail. The foundling narratives of the eighteenth century often culminate with the revelation that the young servant aspiring to the position of aristocracy either was nobly born all along or a woman whose marriage will contain the potentially subversive aspects of her social mobility. Locke's thought experiment, meanwhile, avoids the question of mobility by focusing on the prince's reincarnation rather than exchange; more to the point, his interest ends where a body swap novel would begin—namely, with the lived experience of being in another's body. The other stories, excluding the excerpt from *Arabian Nights*, present animalic transformations, divine intervention, experimentation gone awry, allegories of selfhood, or individuals who surrender parts of their bodies for some material benefit. In contrast,

⁹¹ Hunt writes: "In the classic mystery, identity exchange flourishes; such exchanges occur in no less than four of Agatha Christie's novel. But there's a difference. Gone are the two willing counterparts, gone the sense of experimentation with one's own experience. Instead, an element of coercion, of doom, of danger takes over. One of the counterparts is already dead (though sometimes not known to be so) at the beginning of the novel; the other dies or is condemned to die near the end. In other words, the world of the classic mystery is so closed that society does not condone any trifling with even the external roles of the characters—much less any opening up to new experience." Caroline C Hunt, "Counterparts: Identity Exchange and the Young Adult Audience," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*. (111). Further, I would argue that coercion is often an element of body-swaps during the turn of the century.

⁹² John Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. (original emphasis, 229)

identity exchange tales of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries investigate the embodied experiences of different socioeconomic positions. Further, we might say, as David Trotter has claimed regarding certain genres of popular fiction at roughly the same period, that body-swap fiction “draws attention to the very specific problem of identity which afflicts those whose capital is symbolic through and through: those who only have their own integrity and an esoteric knowledge guaranteed by certificate to sell, rather than muscle or the possession of land, or existing wealth.”⁹³

The point can be illustrated by a comparison between a transformation story from the earlier canon and one from the turn of the century. In Mary Shelley’s *Transformation* (1831), an Italian aristocrat fritters away his inheritance and, as a result, cannot marry his childhood love. Desolate and impoverished, he goes into seclusion where he encounters a crab-like ghoulish creature who offers him a chest of gold to trade bodies for three days. Before the contractual period elapses, the youth begins to doubt that the bargain will be honored and returns home. Shocked to witness the creature romancing his beloved, the youth tackles the figure and kills him in the struggle. Immediately returned to his original body, the youth explains: “...while I cursed bitterly the monstrous dwarf, and blessed the well-directed blow that had deprived him of life, I suddenly checked myself when I heard [my beloved] say ‘Amen!’ knowing that him whom she reviled was my very self.”⁹⁴ The exchange thus was not an exchange at all, but a revelation of a hidden self or a deeper interiority.

By contrast, *The Doubts of Dives* features two college acquaintances from

⁹³ David Trotter. *The English Novel in History 1895-1920*. (6)

⁹⁴ Mary Shelley. *Transformation*. (25) We could characterize the difference between the two stories as vanity versus professional reputation.

different social strata who choose to change lives because they feel that their ambitions have been thwarted by their socioeconomic conditions. Copywriter Kit Cotterel laments his bodily appetites, claiming that “I have had, I own, ambitions...but this fat foolish body of mine forbids. It *will* be fed with meat and drink, fumigated with tobacco, lapped in slumber in bed, and laid at rest in club chairs.... I have to remain the greater part of the day in idleness, and therefore in poverty.”⁹⁵ The millionaire Denis Stirling, on the other hand, blames his lack of drive on being born at the destination: “I have done nothing, and I never shall do anything, except receive my dividends and spend some of them. That is all.”⁹⁶ Whereas Shelley’s novella has the protagonist shrink back in spiritual horror from his “true” self, Besant presents identity as fluid and constructed in a dialectic with the character’s material conditions. Unlike most other body-swaps of the era, it should be noted, the identity exchange here is voluntary: for three months, Stirling earns his living and Cotterel indulges in a style of life that exceeds his means.

To understand the social construction of identity in *The Doubts of Dives* and other body-swaps of the era, we need to step back and examine a series of arguments about knowledge, education, and the stratification of the middle class at the turn of the century. The two characters struggle with what Eric Hobsbawm calls the “novel problem of social identity for those who belonged or wished to belong to some layer or other of these ‘middle classes.’”⁹⁷ Kit Cotterel is not merely glib when he despairs of his expensive tastes; he also ventriloquizes a challenge faced by what Hobsbawm designates as “the

⁹⁵ Walter Besant, *The Doubts of Dives*. (7)

⁹⁶ Ibid. (8) Or as he also claims: “The rich boy—people don’t understand how lonely it makes him—knows that he needn’t work at all. He hasn’t got to learn anything. You might as well expect a girl engaged to be married to learn a trade.” (10)

⁹⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*. (170)

tertiary sector” of the middle class, “most of whom specifically refused to consider themselves as part of the working-class and aspired, often at great material sacrifice, to the style of life of middle class respectability.”⁹⁸ Cotterel, for example, describes how he “has been called to the Bar” but wished he had not been because “the fees finished off all that was left. I am starving.”⁹⁹ Stirling, whose uncle was raised to the aristocracy after he stole the blueprints for a new technology, represents blurring at the other end of the spectrum, which Hobsbawm also outlines: “Conversely, did not ‘arrival’ change the character of the bourgeoisie? Could membership to this class be denied to the members of their second and third generations who lived leisured lives on the family wealth...?”¹⁰⁰ Neither Cotterel nor Stirling belongs to the middle class quite securely, and both experience that partial membership as curtailing their ambitions. At the end of the contract period, Stirling has leveraged freelance opportunities into a permanent position at an economic review and Cotterel opened the country manor into a vacation retreat for the working classes. In a plot twist that makes the story an outlier in another way, the two men ultimately choose to remain in their new bodies and socioeconomic positions. Thus the story suggests that a clerk would devote his newfound resources to social services and a millionaire would give up his fortune for the opportunity to strive for professional success.

It is perhaps unsurprising that occupational distinctions should feature so prominently in this and other body-swap texts, given what Harold Perkin describes as the “rise of professional society” at the turn of the century.¹⁰¹ He argues that professionals

⁹⁸ Ibid. (172)

⁹⁹ Walter Besant. *The Doubts of Dives*. (6)

¹⁰⁰ Eric Hobsbawm. *Age of Empire*. (173)

¹⁰¹ Harold Perkin. *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880*. (87)

came to occupy a growing segment of the working population even as their universities were reformed, their credentialing and exam systems became more intensive, and the number of their associations expanded. British universities at the turn of the century, according to Raymond Williams, were “made more serious” by adapting curricula to “the new needs of imperial and state administration” and preparing aspiring civil servants for more competitive and comprehensive professional examinations.¹⁰² Bruce Kimball outlines a related change in the evolution of professionalization in America at roughly the same time, when “‘professions’ alone began to refer to the expanding group of vocations that were acquiring the patina of learning, as manifested in the phenomenal growth of professional education.”¹⁰³ Thanks to these trends, Burton Bledstein contends, the American middle class man therefore could be defined by his acquired skills, which are not a commodity per se, but “a human capacity—an internal resource” that has an almost limitless potential “to enrich him financially and spiritually.”¹⁰⁴ Literary scholars have noted that authors of the era were attentive to these trends and in some ways uniquely qualified to comment on the complexities of knowledge production. “Expertise,” Trotter writes, “could be conceived as a novel’s topic, and as its method: as a source of the symbolic capital accruing to literature.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Raymond Williams. “The Bloomsbury Fraction.” *Culture and Materialism*. (159) As will be discussed in the chapter on Woolf, Williams does not define what that educational reform entailed precisely.

¹⁰³ Bruce A Kimball. *The “True Professional Ideal” in America: A History*. (303)

¹⁰⁴ “And he does not view his ‘ability’ as a commodity, an external resource, like the means of production or manual labor. His ‘ability’ is a human capacity—an internal resource—as unlimited in its potential expansion and its powers to enrich him financially and spiritually as the enlarging volume of his own intelligence, imagination, aspirations, and acquisitiveness.” Burton J. Bledstein. *The Culture of Professionalism; The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*. (4)

¹⁰⁵ David Trotter. *Paranoid Modernism; Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society*. (130)

There are at least two strains of critical discourse that outline how literature at the turn of the century reflected the authority of professionals. Critics who wish to redeem popular fiction highlight how certain genres reinforced the authority of the professional class, while those who examine more canonical texts describe how modernists positioned themselves as professionals. The first perspective, which will be discussed at length, assumes that professionals sought to allay their anxieties by consuming culture that reinforced their strength, while the latter viewpoint suggests that writers wanted to partake of that same cultural power by amplifying the correspondences between writing and other professional pursuits. “By the early twentieth century,” Louis Menand writes, “the ideology of professionalism had established itself to the extent of making anything that smacked of amateurism look second-rate.”¹⁰⁶ Joyce Piell Wexler further contends that elevating the status of literary work entailed a set of negotiations: “the specter of the artist who wrote for himself was the amateur who wrote for no one else; the underside of the professional was the hack who wrote only for money.”¹⁰⁷ Modernist writers from Flaubert to James Joyce, she claims, navigated this double bind by developing “an aesthetic of difficulty” that enabled them “to justify their need to publish while denying they wrote for readers.”¹⁰⁸ Menand describes other solutions: “group publication,” in the form of coteries and manifestos, served as an analogue to the professional association, while the “cultivation of tastes and principles that seem antagonistic to the capitalist

¹⁰⁶ Louis Menand. *Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and His Context*. (117)

¹⁰⁷ Joyce Piell Wexler. *Who Paid for Modernism?: Art, Money, and the Fiction of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence*. (xii)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. (xii)

world view” by modernists corresponds to the professional ethos where work is partially protected from market pressures.¹⁰⁹

Arguing that authors sought the benefits of professionalism, these scholars also allude to the instabilities associated with professionalism by emphasizing the challenges of publication, association, and audience. If Bledstein is correct to describe the acquired skills of the middle classes as not a commodity but a “human capacity—an internal resource,” then what happens when that form of capital *is* subjected to the pressures of the market? Even though Stirling renounces his fortune for professional fame, there is another story, buried in the text, that suggests how precarious intellectual property can be. A new colleague named Mr. Pinder confides that Stirling’s uncle stole the technological plans that made the family fortune. He concludes his tale by cautioning Stirling-as-Cotterel that there are “two kinds of clever chaps”

There’s the kind which invents, creates, and discovers—and is subsequently robbed, plundered, and turned stark naked into the street. I am one of that kind—every man who writes belongs to that tribe....The second kind contains those who see their way how to make the first kind produce all the work for them to rob. That is the set to join.¹¹⁰

The story is unnecessary to the plot proper, but we can speculate that Besant adds it to describe the vulnerability of “cleverness” as capital—be it in writing or other professions.

Professionals, literary and otherwise, may have held high status around the turn of the century, but their “social authority” was only possible if “the public accepted, by

¹⁰⁹ Louis Menand. *Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and His Context*. (132) “...every profession has a side that is turned away from the anarchy of open competition, a side that shelters its members from the day-to-day vicissitudes of the market and fosters the values of continuity, autonomy, and disinterestedness in a system in which most economic activity seems to be given over to uncertainty, government by externalities, and the pursuit of self-interest. And thus, at the same time, every profession does these things precisely in order to win a competitive advantage—if possible a monopoly—in the marketplace: it aggrandizes itself most effectively by identifying with a higher standard than self-interest.” (114)

¹¹⁰ Walter Besant. *Doubts of Dives*. (123)

choice or sufferance, the professional definition of both its needs and the means to satisfy them.”¹¹¹ Thus, Trotter argues that the stratification of the middle class, especially the rise of its professional fraction, produced an interest in credentialing as well as anxiety about that symbolic capital. And he suggests that securing the value of expertise created a market for paranoiac narratives that confer “a delusion of magical power” on the exceptional individual. For my own part, I assert that new methods of managerial oversight, structured by emerging administrative needs in both production and social services, required a more flexible relationship to knowledge and selfhood.¹¹² I want to emphasize that the professional classes not only needed to shore up their own credentials but were also newly engaged in assessing the abilities of those whom they observed. In 1890, for example, Alfred Marshall advanced the idea of the “steadily increasing economy of skill,” according to which carefully selecting “subordinates of more than ordinary zeal and ability” to perform the “work for which [each] is especially fitted” is the best way to achieve uninterrupted technological growth.¹¹³ Marshall, in other words, theorizes what historian David Warsh has since described as “knowledge as an agent of production.”¹¹⁴ I therefore argue that “knowledge” was a doubly unstable form of symbolic capital for the professional classes: not only problematic as a means of self-definition (in the form of expertise) but also a property whose value among those they managed was both difficult and crucial to assess. The problems of the burgeoning knowledge economy were not localized to professionals alone.

¹¹¹ Thomas L Haskell. (ed.). “The Production of Expertise and the Constitution of Expert Power.” *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory*. (34)

¹¹² David Trotter. *Paranoid Modernism*. (7) In terms of “recognition by the state,” I mean both that experts are recognized and that the state itself.

¹¹³ Alfred Marshall. *Principles of Economics*. (375) If professionals were the product of the stratification of the middle class, then they also involved in further stratifying it.

¹¹⁴ David Warsh. *Knowledge and the Wealth of Nations*. (83)

Around the turn of the century, American scientific management theory explicitly redistributed access to production expertise, wresting control from tradesmen and bestowing it on managers. Frederick Winslow Taylor inadvertently alludes to the thorny dynamics of “knowledge as an agent of production” in defense of the methodology that he developed:

The man who is mentally alert and intelligent is for this very reason entirely unsuited to what would, for him, be the grinding monotony of work of this character. Therefore, the workman who is best suited to handling pig iron is unable to understand the real science of doing this class of work. He is so stupid that the word “percentage” has no meaning to him, and he must consequently be trained by a man more intelligent than himself into the habit of working in accordance with the laws of this science before he can be successful.¹¹⁵

Taylor exposes how expertise can determine hierarchy in the workforce and also serve as a precarious form of capital. The stakes of possessing the right knowledge are high: the iron handler is stripped of his trade expertise and, with it, the leverage to set the pace of production because he essentially lacks the correct vocabulary and conceptual tools. More to the point, though, the passage shows that the very quality that is supposed to keep the manager from identifying with the tradesman actually puts the two in alignment. Taylor may differentiate intelligence from knowledge, but his argument relies on circular reasoning: the iron handler does repetitive work because he is too “stupid” to do anything else and we know that he is “stupid” because he does the work of an iron handler.¹¹⁶ Yet presumably the manager can only make production more efficient by studying the tradesman’s routines. This is to say that the manager, whose “superior” intelligence qualifies him to transform general work habits, must immerse himself in that same

¹¹⁵ Frederick Taylor. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. (59)

¹¹⁶ The only other evidence of the tradesman’s intellectual deficiencies is his incomprehension of words like “percentage,” which is a form of acquired knowledge.

“grinding monotony,” which should be intolerable to an intelligent man. His acquired knowledge, in part, is derived from the tradesman’s—with all the conflict that implies.¹¹⁷

It also bears noting that knowledge, as a quality to be displayed *and* to be examined, was made less secure between what Giovanni Arrighi describes as the rise of the American cycle of capital accumulation (defined as starting in the late nineteenth century) and the decline of the British cycle of capital accumulation (defined as ending in the late sixteenth century).¹¹⁸ In his study of romance genres of the *fin de siècle*, Nicholas Daly resists twenty-first century scholarship’s declinist narratives of the British empire, in contending that the time period was one of “late Victorian transformation rather than crisis.”¹¹⁹ Like Trotter, Daly traces continuities between popular and modernist fiction through fantasies of professional power: where Trotter highlights how paranoia serves as a corrective for the loss of charisma in bureaucracy, Daly sees “the installation of the realm of professional men as the rightful victors over such dangerous individualists [as Dracula]...”¹²⁰ He contends that Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* does not reflect cultural anxieties so much as it offers a vision of how professionals can draw on their expertise to shape society. A fantasy of collaboration among experts, he argues, was possible once professionals became an emerging and then dominant faction of the middle class during the *fin de siècle*. Isolating the Edwardian period from Daly’s analysis, Trotter contends that a glut of professionals in the workforce created more competition, which meant that the triumphalism of the late Victorian period was

¹¹⁷ The British did not adopt scientific management until the war, but its concepts were available in the engineering trade journals and I see Taylor’s ideas as being on a continuum with those of Marshall and other British economists who worked on developing human capital.

¹¹⁸ Arrighi, Giovanni. *The Long Twentieth Century*. (6-7)

¹¹⁹ Nicholas Daly. *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siecle*. (28)

¹²⁰ Ibid. (50)

eventually superseded by fractiousness within the group. In analyzing fantasies of either professional cohesion or rivalry, however, both scholars foreground the economic prosperity of specialists. This chapter covers both time periods and also extends into the 1930s, and it rests on an analysis of how that economic prosperity concealed a more turbulent fiscal narrative.

While it is correct that the British professional class achieved a cultural and social prominence in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, it would be a mistake to overstate their influence in directing the economy, especially within a global context. In so venturing, I am guided by Giovanni Arrighi, who argues that transitional periods in the capitalist world-economy are heralded by an uptick in financialization, where capital is not reinvested in established industries but directed towards credit, trade diversification, and speculation instead.¹²¹ According to Arrighi, British merchant financiers' "superior knowledge of world market conditions" and trade liquidity during the turn of the century turned "the instability of the world-economy into a source of considerable and secure speculative profits."¹²² In fact, they often encouraged instability, finding that financial expansion "does not follow a steady path but becomes subject to more or less violent downswings and upswings which recreate and destroy over and over again the profitability of capital invested in trade."¹²³ The period, therefore, is divided: on the one hand, there is a movement to refine technological efficiencies through the cultivation of talent, as evident in Marshall's "steadily increasing economy of skill" and Taylor's contributions to scientific management theory in America; on the other, there is a

¹²¹ Giovanni Arrighi. *The Long Twentieth Century; Money, Power and the Origins of our Times*. (6-7)

¹²² Ibid. (241)

¹²³ Ibid. (240)

counter-movement that profited from the disruption of established markets, production lines, and industries. Arrighi therefore contrasts a “technological business logic, which has an interest in uninterrupted industrial efficiencies” with a “strictly pecuniary business logic, which is indifferent to disturbances in the industrial balance.”¹²⁴ Arrighi argues that, for those in the latter camp, there was an incentive to divest from British industries and turn towards financialization models and foreign ventures. This is to say that although the British professional class constituted a key portion of the workforce, the symbolic capital of their expertise in certain ways became more rather than less tenuous during the period under examination here, given the risky financial investments that continually changed the economic landscape. British professionals had to convince the public of the value of their expertise at a time when, for example, trade improved but real wages overall may have declined domestically.

Financialization strategies may have benefited capitalist markets and professionals’ own wages, but they could also contradict the objectives of professionals in the fields of both production and social services. We can perhaps see this principle at work not only in the decline of real wages for workers in general, but also in the emergence of the term “unemployment,” which coincides with the long economic downturn of the 1880s and 1890s.¹²⁵ In 1899, John A. Hobson argued that the category of poverty had to be broadened to include the “lowest strata of the wage-earning class’

¹²⁴ Technically, in this instance, he describes the differences between German and British administrative objectives during the war; however, he suggests that this divide has a broader application.

¹²⁵ Raymond Williams. *Key Terms: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*: “Clearly the modern sense of unemployment depends on its separation from the associations of *idle*; it describes a social situation rather than a personal condition (*idleness*).” (326) Pericles Lewis notes “the new assertiveness of the working classes made itself felt in a coalminers’ strike in South Wales in 1910 and dockers’ strikes throughout the country in 1911. During the Edwardian period, wages had not kept pace with rising prices....The change in attitudes also led to changes in political power.” Pericles Lewis. *Cambridge Guide to Modernism*. (88)

because the “‘poor law’... assigns a meaning too narrow for our purpose.”¹²⁶ Michael Sayeau explains that scientific management could intensify the output of the worker *and* deskill the work itself only because there was a “permanent well of unemployed workers.”¹²⁷ Further, Sayeau writes that “it was quickly dawning on both labor and capital during this period that unemployment was a normal category of economic life, a structural effect of the wage-system and modern industrial competition itself” rather than an expression of personal temperament.¹²⁸

Taylor tries to skirt the dilemma of job loss when he admits that all but one of the iron handlers was fired as a result of his experimentation in scientific management. Addressing the reader, he cautions that his “sympathy is entirely wasted” because the layoffs were “the first step toward finding them work for which they were peculiarly fitted.”¹²⁹ Taylor’s caveat about sympathy calls attention to the fact that many readers already felt that moral claim.¹³⁰ This fact is made clear in Frank Gilbreth’s *Primer of Scientific Management*, which provides responses to the questions, submitted by managers and engineers, about the method: “How can every man be sure that his merit will be discovered and that he will be promoted to the highest notch he can fill?;” “Is it not a system of promotion based upon the contest principle—i.e., that the man who has the least regard for his fellows, coupled with the most ability, wins?;” and “Is it not a scheme that will wedge apart the college man and the mechanic into opposed classes?”¹³¹

¹²⁶ John A. Hobson. *Problems of Poverty: An Inquiry into the Industrial Condition of the Poor*. (1)

¹²⁷ By this, he means Marx’s industrial reserve army. Michael Sayeau. “Work, Unemployment, and the Exhaustion of Fiction in Heart of Darkness.” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. (34)

¹²⁸ Ibid. (35)

¹²⁹ Frederick Taylor. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. (60)

¹³⁰ It also reveals that job category is an unstable method of assessing intelligence: the iron handler, whose “stupidity” is proved by the nature of his work is later determined to be improperly matched to that same job.

¹³¹ Frank Gilbreth, *Primer of Scientific Management*. (78, 79, 98)

Professionals may often have personally benefitted from economic turbulence, but that does not mean that they were not apprehensive about it. Daly argues that evidence of national decline found in government reports only served to strengthen the authority of professionals in “human management,” whose “expertise would extend into that which liberal ideology had once designated as the private sphere” through medical and other social services.¹³² I would add, however, that although professionals in human management, like those in production, may have had more clout in the public sphere than previously, they also had to grapple with the rise in unemployment as well as other economic dynamics over which they had little control. Moreover, if an awareness of national decline created a demand for more jobs in the social services, it also intimates a shift in the psychology of the middle classes. As Hobsbawm notes in *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*, the rising interest in sociology correlates with the stagnation and decline in social mobility that followed the 1875 depression and continued through the subsequent rise in prosperity during the *belle époque*. Hobsbawm ties the emergent field of study to members of the middle classes who had achieved their positions in society within one generation and were beset by the anxiety that while there might be no end to the opportunities for ascending higher heights, there was also no end of chances to lose status.¹³³ In the era when body-swaps first emerged on the literary scene, in other words, the middle classes were more keenly aware of threats to mobility than they had been previously.¹³⁴

¹³² He specifically references “The Report on Physical Deterioration.”

¹³³ “The great majority of all these middle classes, at least insofar as most of them were the product of the era since the dual revolution, had one thing in common: social mobility, past or present....The ‘new social strata’ did not stop moving even when recognized as ‘arrived.’” Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*. (173)

¹³⁴ Body-exchange fiction can literalize fears of dispossession in a singular and fantastic manner, like in *The Ealing Miracle*: “[Olive] was conscious of being shabbily clad, and of watching an exact counterfeit of

Professionalization, as Magali Sarfatti Larson notes, is inherently unstable because it involves the contradiction of subjecting abstract knowledge to market pressures. This means that expertise needs to be shrouded in enough mystery to protect the economic interests of corporations but also standardized enough to be legible to the public and to the internal hierarchy within the profession. Systematizing the various cognitive skills and methods, associated with a profession, however, opens that protected knowledge up to “a democratic potential: because it reduces the margin of indetermination and secrecy, standardization broadens the possibilities of access.”¹³⁵ In other words, technical knowledge can be susceptible to demands for greater inclusion emanating both from members of the public and from those within the field itself; and we may speculate that these dynamics are even more strained during periods of economic instability. Moreover, professionals during the period at issue here could not be unresponsive to the needs of society in general. Although Trotter and Daly claim that professionals of the era attempted to elevate the status of their work by accentuating their differences from the wider public, but some of their responsibilities clearly required them to be more embedded in the lives of others. They needed, for example, to study job fitness, work routines, diet, sanitation, health outcomes, and other aspects of the private sphere that were previously hidden, as well as how individuals and systems were integrated more generally. If professionals needed to develop associations and collaborate on best practices, they also had to be mindful of massive layoffs, internal competition, and the widespread evidence of social stagnation. The body-swap form, in my view,

herself, down to the minutest details of her appearance, standing at the front door, and holding her own purse and latchkey in her hand.” Horace W. C. Newte. *The Ealing Miracle*. (41)

¹³⁵ Magali Sarfatti Larson. *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*. (42)

offered a mechanism for mitigating these culturally diffuse anxieties because it forestalls immersion in character even as it takes social mobility as its object of study.

By foregrounding interclass relations, I differ from Trotter and Daly, who tend to put intraclass positioning at the forefront of their analyses of fantasy and modernism. This is not to say that Trotter and Daly elide English working-class unrest or the challenges of convincing the public of the value of expertise; they do address these cultural features. But they also give preference to texts that emphasize the distance between professionals and other classes, texts in which the lower classes are allegorized as either a deteriorating social body that gives rise to a collaborative ethos or as part of the undifferentiated threat to which paranoia narratives respond. A text like “The Late Mr. Elevesham” may allude to concerns about unrecognized professional talent, but these anxieties are valenced quite differently than in vampiric or paranoiac narratives. It would be difficult, for example, to see Eden’s experience reflected in the account of paranoia that Trotter describes:

The paranoiac is never not in public, in full view of his persecutors; and yet the attention uniformly devoted to him only goes to prove his uniqueness, to confirm his own assessment of himself. The paranoiac feels that all eyes are on him all the time, that the whole world is acting in concert against him; in that excess of attention he finds his own triumphant excess of singularity.¹³⁶

Trotter focuses on texts like *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*, in which the private sphere is transformed into a public platform, while Daly contends that professionals in *Dracula* are successfully able to infiltrate and then sanitize the private sphere. Body-swaps, in contrast, are less confident about the power of the middle class to transform cultural space inasmuch as their characters typically lose social visibility after

¹³⁶ David Trotter. *Paranoid Modernism*. (102)

their transformation. A character in body-swap fiction is confirmed not in his individuality but in the ease with which he can evade the notice of friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and even family.

Willing to accept social indifference, authors of body-swaps are also more comfortable with exploring the benefits of cultural adaptation. In this, body-swaps radically differ from the texts of Trotter's analysis, where the paranoiac "wishes above all, and at almost any cost, to be recognized for what he uniquely is, and the loss of identity which mimicry always entails is fatal to that project."¹³⁷ Identity-exchange fiction may traffic in similar fears of both personal and professional erasure, but its characters cannot deny the utility of cultural accommodation. Indeed the humor or crux of the body-swap narrative accretes around characters' attempts to blend into a new environment or their failure to do so convincingly: a husband heavily applies make-up to his wife's face, a merchant answers questions on subjects his son is expected to know, and a professor of metaphysics is subjected to the mistreatment intended for his student. Moreover, body-swaps connect narrative pleasure to the act of reverse-engineering the habitual processes of others. Eden eventually stops trying to convince the household staff that the transformation has occurred and turns his attention to replicating Elvisham's everyday routines. Body-swaps do not indulge in fantasies of self-reliance but rather suggest, as Regenia Gagnier does in her study of consumer culture and taste in the nineteenth century, that "there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not

¹³⁷ Ibid. (126) Trotter traces the mistrust of "social mimesis" to the intensification of administrative infrastructure in the captive markets of the British Empire: while these outposts became more critical in shoring up the domestic economy by driving demand for British products, there was a fear that British professionals were in danger of losing their Englishness by living abroad.

greatly determined by what lies outside it.”¹³⁸

Generic Transformation

Anxieties about downward social mobility or unrecognized talent make themselves manifest at the level of not only content but also of form. Body-swap fiction of the turn-of-the century responds to middle class audiences by taking mobility as its object of interest *and* by disrupting the patterns of other genres that confer social mobility or conclude with the consolidation of a stable identity. Anxiety about expertise and reputation are foregrounded in body-swap stories that involve scientific, scholarly, and military achievements. This point is well illustrated by three body-swap fictions that feature scientists who lose their professional standing because of a monomaniacal passion for their work: “The Great Keinplatz Experiment” (1919) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in which a professor switches bodies with his unpaid lab assistant; *An Exchange of Souls* (1911), in which Dr. Myas fuses with his wife during a botched experiment to determine whether the soul is divisible from matter; and “The Thing on the Doorstep” by H. P. Lovecraft, where a scholar’s interest in the occult results in multiple, coerced body exchanges until he becomes a social outcast known for his erratic behavior. We might linger for a moment over the first of these because Doyle’s story has features that translate to the other two.

In “The Great Keinplatz Experiment,”¹³⁹ a professor wants to cement his scientific legacy through a public demonstration—an experiment on one of his

¹³⁸ Regina Gagnier. *The Insatiability of Human Wants*. Technically, Gagnier repurposes an insight from George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* in order to comment on the transformation of the self under economic pressures.

¹³⁹ The title translates as “The Great No Place (or Utopia) Experiment.”

students—of his hypothesis that the spirit is not trapped within the finite body. Once the experiment seemingly fails, the professor flees the public domain for the comforts of home. On his commute, he is physically accosted by his students and threatened with an academic tribunal for insubordination by a colleague. When his usually compliant wife and daughter refuse to serve him dinner or fetch his slippers, Von Baumgarten is hurt but assumes that his mistreatment is a reaction to his public failure. Of course, these anomalous interactions eventually become legible to the protagonist once he realizes that he inhabits another's body. This is to say that the triumph of scientific discovery turns absurd, once the focus shifts to the laboring body of the assistant.

The initial tone of the story is earnest, as the narrator calculates how many hours the professor has spent researching the possibilities of separating consciousness from matter:

A hundred times a day, the Professor asked himself whether it was possible for the human spirit to exist apart from the body for a time and then to return to it once again....since the spirit is by its very nature invisible, we cannot see these comings and goings, but we still see their effect in the body of the subject, now rigid and inert, now struggling to narrate impressions which could never have come to it by natural means.¹⁴⁰

But the plot eventually devolves into slapstick. And this tonal change alerts the reader to an underlying question: why must a methodical scientist with a legitimate theoretical interest be subjected to a series of physical humiliations, and a professional shunning, that can occur only if he is in the body of his student, Fritz von Hartmann? The answer is available in the student's reply to the professor's attempt to induce him to participate in the experiment by appealing to his sense of honor and glory:

¹⁴⁰ Arthur Conan Doyle "The Great Keinplatz Experiment." *The Great Keinplatz Experiment and Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen*. (74-75)

Am I to be paid always thus? Did I not stand two hours upon a glass insulator while you poured electricity into my body? Have you not stimulated my phrenic nerves, besides ruining my digestion with a galvanic current round my stomach? Four-and-thirty times you have mesmerized me, and what have I got from all this? Nothing.¹⁴¹

In the hundreds of times a day the professor theorized about the relation of mind and body, he has “never thought about” the physical pain his test subject has endured in three dozen previous experiments. Professor Von Baumgarten’s suffering a few twists of the arms, verbal reprimands, and a douse of water may begin to balance the account for Fritz’s overstimulated nervous and digestive systems. When he discovers that the experiment was partially successful, he exclaims: “My theory is proved—but at what expense! Is the most scholarly mind in Europe to go about with this frivolous exterior? Oh the labours of a lifetime are ruined!”¹⁴² Von Baumgarten, in other words, frets that his professional reputation will not be attached to the physical body that has labored to create it. The pursuit of private success through scientific discovery, in body swap fiction, reveals both the occlusion of the assistant’s labor *and* the precarity of the scientist’s position in his professional network.

Thus the body-swap’s play with the narrative conventions of ascent through scientific achievement. Turning now to the bildungsroman, we might note that there are at least two body-swaps of the era (*Vice Versa* and *Laughing Gas*) that are notably indebted to this genre, which we might describe as a subset of the upward mobility genre that offers a less conflicted negotiation of the competing desires for individual advancement and social stability. To explicate how the two texts operate, I first need to outline a few features of the bildungsroman and its subsequent transformation around the turn of the

¹⁴¹ Ibid. (76)

¹⁴² Ibid. (82)

twentieth century. Franco Moretti has argued that the European bildungsroman mitigates the tensions of social mobility in two ways. The young protagonist may be buffeted by destabilizing forces of capitalism, but he develops a fuller interiority as a result; and compulsory changes demanded by mobility are contained through association with youth, which must necessarily end. Bildungsromane, therefore, naturalize the belief that advancement involves sacrifice and teach middle-class readers to internalize the concept of exchange.¹⁴³ And in the traditional bildungsroman, moreover, the restless and disruptive qualities of youth eventually are subsumed into a stable adult identity. By the early twentieth century, however, the genre transforms with a proliferation of “stories of ‘formation’ [*Bildung*]*—in which the *Bildung* does not occur.*”¹⁴⁴ The formal change occurs, according to Moretti, when authors treat youth as “a boundless field of possibility” in a new sense: “rather than a *preparation for something else*, it becomes a *value in itself*, and the individual’s greatest desire is to *prolong* it.”¹⁴⁵ Moretti further hypothesizes that maintaining a fluid identity into adulthood aligns with tactics of consumer psychology that respond to an influx of commodities from imperial outposts, while Jed Esty contends that the theme of arrested development emerges when European empires begin to lose power over their colonial holdings. By “separating adolescence from the dictates of *Bildung*,” Esty argues, “modernist writing created an autonomous value for youth and cleared space for its own resistance to linear plots while registering

¹⁴³ As Moretti writes: “Beyond organisitic synthesis, what appears here is the indelible image of bourgeois thought—exchange. You would like such and such values to be realized?—fine, but then you must also accept these others, for without them the former cannot exist. An exchange, and one in which something is gained and something is lost.” Franco Moretti. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. (17)

¹⁴⁴ Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic, The World System from Goethe to Garcia Marquez*. (195)

¹⁴⁵ Franco Moretti. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. (original emphasis, 177)

the failure of imperialism as a discourse of global development.”¹⁴⁶

The two body-swaps I glance at here initially seem to conform to the twentieth-century adaptations of the bildungsroman that Moretti and Esty describe: F. Anstey’s *Vice Versa* (1885) follows Paul Bultitude, a colonial merchant who exchanges bodies with his son, and P.G. Wodehouse’s *Laughing Gas* (1936) tracks the misadventures of a newly minted aristocrat, who trades identities with a child star while under anesthetic at a dentist’s office. We can grant that, when middle-aged men are turned into boys again, adult identity ceases to be coherent and, as Esty describes, “the realist proportions of biographical time” are distorted.¹⁴⁷ Youth, however, is dynamic in these texts rather than frozen, which has three consequences: youth is shorn of its desirable qualities; the insecurities of mobility are not successfully contained to a period of biological development; and the value of interiority changes. The novels are set into motion by young men chafing at the privations and debts of boyhood: child star Joey Cooley “barge[s] into” Lord Havershot’s body because he finds the conditions of a studio contract unbearable, while the transformation in *Vice Versa* occurs when Paul Bultitude denies his son the requisite funds to repay loans accrued at school.

Rather than wanting to “prolong” youth as Moretti contends, these characters want either to accelerate the maturation process or to cling to the comforts of adult stability. For example, Cooley plans to exact revenge on the managers, agents, and wranglers who have exploited him throughout his career by maturing (“I’m biding my time. I’m waiting. Some day I’ll grow up. And when I do, oh, baby!”¹⁴⁸), while Dick

¹⁴⁶ Jed Esty. *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*. (25)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. (25)

¹⁴⁸ P.G. Wodehouse. *Laughing Gas*. (60)

Bultitude envies his father, imagining “how unspeakably delightful it must be...to be grown up and never worried by the thoughts of school and lesson-books; to be able to look forward to returning to the same comfortable house, and living the same easy life, day after day, week after week...” After the transformation, the middleaged men scramble to return to their original bodies, lamenting the loss of expensive fabrics, fine foods, and comforts of their previous socioeconomic condition.¹⁴⁹ This is to say that youth may transcend biological limits in these novels, but the fantastical effect is used to reaffirm the teleological narrative of the traditional bildungsroman. A fixed identity and economic status remain the desire of characters both young and old, but that goal here appears more difficult to achieve or stabilize.

In other words, if the period of youth should serve as a natural limit that tames the instabilities of mobility, then these stories, featuring a fantastical return of youth, suggest that the restless drives of mobility cannot be contained fully. And they notably conclude with the characters experiencing a slight downward mobility or a lowering of social status. Both men are preoccupied with the bodies they have left behind, such as when Lord Havershot describes his nostalgia: “However much your soul may have gone into someone else’s body, you see, you can’t help feeling a sort of responsibility for the body that used to be yours before someone else’s soul went into it. You don’t want the new tenant damaging its prestige and lowering it socially.”¹⁵⁰ When Bultitude returns to his original state, he spends “considerable time and trouble to repair all the damage his son’s

¹⁴⁹ F. Anstey. *Vice Versa*. (8) Dick’s observation is matched by his father’s sense of contentment: “...Mr. Bultitude’s attitude—he was lying back in a well-wadded leather arm-chair, with a glass of claret at his elbow and his feet stretched out towards the ruddy blaze of the fire—seemed at first sight to imply that happy after-dinner condition of perfect satisfaction with oneself and things in general, which is the natural outcome of a good cook, a good conscience, and a good digestion. (Ibid, 4)

¹⁵⁰ P. G. Wodehouse. *Laughing Gas*. (127)

boyish excesses” and discovers that he “will never quite clear himself of the cloud that hangs over a man of business who, in the course of however well regulated a career, is known to have been at least once ‘a little odd.’”¹⁵¹ Again, the instabilities of mobility are no longer checked by the natural limit of youth, but characters gain in empathy while losing in personal status.

A final genre that body-swaps disrupt is that of the domestic novel, which shares some of the conceits of both upward mobility narratives and the *Bildungsroman*. Scholars of the novel, for example, have long theorized that the marriage plot serves to reinforce an individual’s ability to be integrated into the modern liberal state. Nancy Armstrong argues that domestic fiction served as a method for establishing the primacy of individual attributes in determining social place, while Alex Woloch details how a courtship plot may offer stability for the individual but requires social instability to do so. Domestic fiction, for Armstrong, was essential in consolidating bourgeois power because it disrupted the kinship relationships established under aristocracy. Rather than encouraging or forbidding desire based on class or other loyalties, early novelists created a universal ideal by making a female character desirable, not for her rank or nobility, but because of her perception or her sensibilities.¹⁵² These novelists, she contends, treats the outward signs of status and political identities as mere surface, beneath which characters have rich interiorities that represent the authentic self. Alex Woloch extends and reworks Armstrong’s core argument by noting how the competition for a suitor’s attention leads

¹⁵¹ F. Anstey. *Vice Versa*. (183)

¹⁵² “This struggle to represent sexuality took the form of a struggle to individuate wherever there was a collective body, to attach psychological motives to what had been openly political behavior of contending groups, and to evaluate these according to a set of norms that exalted the domestic woman over and above her aristocratic counterpart.” (14) Armstrong does suggest that this changes during the Victorian period when womanhood becomes a conceptual category with which male novelists would no longer identify.

to a presentation of a character's individuality: "The social process of being 'singled out' is then slowly transformed, over the course of the asymmetric narrative into the lived experience of 'singularity.'" ¹⁵³ The courtship plot, he explains, does more than put various female attributes under the review of the male suitor: "the analysis of a person in terms of a quality, the understanding of a quality as distinct and independent of the person, the engulfing of a person within this hardened reified quality—all this emerges out of competition itself." ¹⁵⁴ The system of marriage in a capitalist economy that requires structural inequality, in other words, necessarily produces disequilibrium.

Body swap fiction, in contrast, presents an even more diffuse disequilibrium that destabilizes both social relations and individual identity. If Armstrong is correct that bourgeois power was consolidated by prizing individuality over claims to status, then body swap fiction suggests that a developed interiority is no longer a sufficiently stable cultural coordinate. Potential suitors are rendered ineligible because, after a swap, they resemble the woman's father, a senile old man, a precocious child star, or the woman herself. Body-swaps thus block common pathways for establishing identity even as they forcibly redirect habits of desire among characters. The transformation allows for a reassessment of the potential marriage, as well as its social meaning and arrangement. Some of these novels (*The Return*, "The Thing on the Doorstep," and *The Ealing Miracle*, for example) track characters after they have already secured the marriage that has permitted them to rise socioeconomically, noting the insecurity and difficulties in what should be stable unions. The body-swap device creates inroads for reassessing that social and private contract by allowing for loop-holes, infidelities, and transgressions. By

¹⁵³ Alex Woloch. *The One vs. the Many*. (59)

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. (59)

changing the conditions of marriage, body-swaps trouble some of the familiar patterns according which marriage and courtship shape interiority.

Body-swaps may, in sum, be said to expose the vulnerabilities of genres that typically instruct the reader on how to create a stable identity. In body-swap fiction, the very structures and achievements that typically confer power on members of the bourgeoisie—upward mobility, education, scientific discovery, military service, the marriage market—no longer seem securely to reward or even to recognize individual merit. Whatever their style or tone, identity-exchange fictions disrupt expected genre trajectories by raising concerns about professional erasure, about the acquisition of knowledge that cannot be communicated later, and about the erosion of companionate intimacy. The body-swap plot device may voice middle class anxieties by literalizing threats to mobility; however, the authors of such texts minimize those concerns by suspending the established conventions of the genres of individual distinction. As Lauren Berlant writes, “blockage is central to any genre’s successful execution: the threat that *x* might *not* happen (love in a love plot, poetic justice in a thriller, death in a tragedy) allows absorbing but not shocking anxieties to be stimulated and vanquished.”¹⁵⁵ We could say that body-swap fiction introduces blockage so early and suspends resolution for so long that “the threat that *x* might *not* happen” becomes irrelevant. These texts instead track the picaresque adventures available in quotidian experiences and, as a result, become invested in process than in resolution. In other words, these stories shift emphasis from concerns about individual identity, recognized merit, and upward mobility to reflection on experience, tactility, and the more diffuse attractions of other characters’

¹⁵⁵ Lauren Berlant. *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (19)

being. Body-swaps thus are a form of narrative production that may speak about professional detachment but do not exactly rely on it, instead entertaining fantasies of proximity, embeddedness, or empathy. In the next section, however, I will briefly explore the limitations of the plot device, specifically around the fantastical representation of economic experience and the confusion of readerly sympathy that follows.

Everyday Fantasies

The literary experiment of body-swap fiction began cautiously, with their writers themselves offering up reservations about the texts. Anstey, author of what is likely the first English language body-swap, sets the precedent with the preface to *Vice Versa* (1885): "...in these days of philosophical fiction, metaphysical romance, and novels with a purpose, some apology may perhaps be needed for a tale which has the unambitious and frivolous aim of mere amusement."¹⁵⁶ His sense that it might be wise to temper expectations about the plot device has proven prescient. Relatively few critics since have directly addressed or even tangentially referenced the subject of body-swap fiction and, even within this limited scholarship, there is an implicit consensus that the concept is riddled with problems so self-evident that they require only the briefest articulation. Often expressed in casual asides, the criticisms range from labelling the plot device "gimmicky,"¹⁵⁷ "consistently non-serious,"¹⁵⁸ or juvenile¹⁵⁹ to dismissing the texts

¹⁵⁶ The introduction to F. Anstey's *Vice Versa*.

¹⁵⁷ Caroline C. Hunt. "Counterparts: Identity Exchange and the Young Adult Audience." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*. (113)

¹⁵⁸ On *Vice Versa* as part of a larger dissection of literary fairy tales: "They are consistently non-serious, but in a heavily elaborate and even patronizing way, as if the authors were not sure what tone to take with their audience (implicitly a childish one)..." Tom Shippey. "Rewriting the Core: Transformations of the Fairy Tale in Contemporary Writing." *A Companion to the Fairy Tale*, ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson and Anna Chaudhri (254)

¹⁵⁹ See: Caroline Hunt, Hilda Ellis Davidson, and Dieter Petzold.

outright.¹⁶⁰ This scholarly emphasis on fantasy and amusement, however, occludes the more serious aspirations and implications of these texts from the turn of the century. Even Anstey admits in his autobiography that the frivolity of *Vice Versa* encodes a story of personal tragedy: the early death of his mother and his distant father subsequently sending him to boarding school. If these stories were “consistently non-serious” and giddy, they might be easier to categorize¹⁶¹; but in fact they straddle a number of divides of genre and aim, partaking of realism and romance, reenchantment and disenchantment, science fiction and fantasy, thought experiment and embodiment experiment, satire and non-satirical sincerity.

We can notice that these problems of classification pivot around the distinctive ways body-swap authors disrupt realist conventions—the device of identity exchange being one of many writerly strategies that resisted the realist modes of nineteenth-century fiction. For Franco Moretti, “the romanticism of fantasy” enabled the reader to postpone consolidating an identity—a demand structured by realism—in order to indulge in the various fantasies promised by the intensification of consumption around the turn of the century.¹⁶² Frederic Jameson contends that the cultural authority of realism began to

¹⁶⁰ “Little need be said of the last two German Reed pieces *Happy Arcadia* and *Eyes No Eyes...*” Andrew Crowther. *Contradiction Contradicted: The Plays of W. S. Gilbert*. (42)

¹⁶¹ Interestingly, Hunt and Petzold try to restrict body-swaps to children’s literature but are stymied when trying to determine if the concept does appeal to young people. Petzold raises the question directly: “We may well doubt whether such a depiction of childhood will appeal to children, who as readers of non-fantasy fiction are probably more concerned with how to find their way in the world of adults than with how to avoid it. It is primarily adults to whom these radical accounts of childhood appeal.” (34) Petzold, Dieter. “A Race Apart: Children in Late Victorian and Edwardian Children’s Books.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*. (33) Hunt, on the other hand, merely stumbles on the problem: she argues that the concept has “peculiar appeal to adolescents, offering a kind of wish fulfillment that suits their unique needs” but then her framework cannot accommodate more adult-oriented fare like *Turnabout*. She writes that “These have not kept their readership as well as most other exchange novels—perhaps in part because much of the humor depends upon fixed ideas of social and sexual roles, fixed ideas which have since become dated.” (112)

¹⁶² “The limitless offer of ‘cultural contents’ typical of the capitalist metropolis presents the individual with a paradox: to realize a determined identity, thereby fatally renouncing, however, the ever new and varied

recede from the turn of the century because realism could only reflect a hopelessly limited horizon of possibility in which consumerism had ossified into reification and the logic of capitalism had come to seem inescapable.¹⁶³ “Magical narratives,” in contrast, offered a new vision of a different organization of life, politics, and history. Georg Lukács determines that “the cult of the abnormal, of the perverse,” associated with the “non-literary” works of horror or detective fiction, is more closely aligned with realism than assumed because fantasy must draw on historical reality for its source material.¹⁶⁴ But for him the reality that these “non-literary” genres present, however, is distorted. In fact, fantasy in Lukács’s view produces the paralysis of the political imagination that Jameson associates with realism by untethering the affective response to capitalism from the historical actors who engineer and participate in the system.

Consumer fantasies that promise the limitless potentiality of identity and, conversely, highlight its excessive determination; systems of economic asymmetry that are both occluded and hyper-exposed; fantasy structured by history and freed from entrenched patterns: the contradictions of body-swap fiction productively engage the paradoxes of the theories about agency, the economy, and politics presented by Moretti,

products of modernity—or to plunge into the great adventure of ‘self-estrangement’, but at the risk of psychic and spiritual disintegration. One either has to renounce being ‘modern’, it seems, or renounce being an ‘individual’. But thanks to the ironico-aesthetic attitude, the contradiction disappears: on the one hand, the romanticism of fantasy keeps alive all the possibilities of the surrounding world, and even strengthens them beyond measure; on the other hand, since this is an imaginary space and time, which can be reorganized at will, the individual is not forced into that merry-go-round of real identifications...” (Moretti, *Way of the World*. 176)

¹⁶³ “It is in the context of the gradual reification of realism in late capitalism that romance once again comes to be felt as the place of narrative heterogeneity and of freedom from that reality principle to which a no oppressive realistic representation is hostage. Romance now again seems to offer the possibility of sensing other historical rhythms, and of demonic or Utopian transformations of a real now unshakably set in place...” Jameson Frederic. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative As A Socially Symbolic Symbolic Act*. (104) Although Jameson describes late capitalism, which might suggest the post-45 era, he specifically references William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*, which was published in 1903.

¹⁶⁴ Georg Lukacs. “Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann.” *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*. (47)

Jameson, and Lukács. In Wells's "The Late Mr. Elvesham," Eden may have a fluid identity, but his actual experience is suffocating; he understands his own exploitation but cannot seek redress; and his magical transformation only leaves him mired in a certain kind of realist world. Thus body-swaps as a literary form can complicate critical narratives that associate identity plasticity with consumerism or with economic models that exclude production, as perhaps best exemplified in Peter Nicholls's writing on the *fin de siècle*:

International finance thus comes to seem something superhuman, a force working according to its own laws and having no clear connection to the mundane sphere of production: a fetishism of capital which structurally complements a fetishism of the commodity. This helps to explain why so many fantasies of power and mobility during the period are emblemized by the adventures of consumerism, since to purchase is, in these terms, to 'liberate' oneself into the cycle of capital's reproduction. The space of modernity thus provides the occasion for a peculiar *disembodiment*, with the spectacle of endless consumer desire abolishing the 'merely human' limits of the ailing body....¹⁶⁵

As detailed above, international financialization strategies may have partially obscured the flows of capital and attendant social transformations: however, for the middle classes, there remained nonetheless a decided "connection to the mundane sphere of production." Further, flexibility about identity could be a useful complement to the growth of managerial tactics and social service methods that required more closely observed examinations of living and working conditions. By privileging fantasies of power, Nicholls cultivates an archive of texts that depict the act of consumption as disembodied and dazzling: body-swaps, by contrast, advance fantasies of vulnerability, exposure, and embodiment that are associated with sphere of work.

On this point we might note as well that body-swap fiction is distinctive, within

¹⁶⁵ Peter Nicholls. *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*. (80)

the non-mimetic literature of the era, for its way of both foregrounding and occluding economic agency. In body-swap narratives, mobility is often instantaneous, as in a quip from *The Doubts of Dives* in which the narrator describes how a law clerk stands immediately after he changes bodies with an aristocrat: “the *nouveau riche* straightened himself out.”¹⁶⁶ No reader could actually emulate Kit Cotterel’s navigation of the social hierarchy, because Cotterel becomes wealthy in the matter of seconds, when his consciousness is transferred to another body. Identity-exchange fiction lacks precisely what Bruce Robbins finds so useful about upward mobility narratives, which, “by focusing on the passage *between* identities and how one gets from here to there...reveal something important about power which can never be located within one identity alone.”¹⁶⁷ The passage between identities in body-swap fiction is more or less immediate and thus cannot illuminate the contours of that power in this specific way. At the same time, body-swaps resist fitting neatly into Lukács’s test of whether a text is escapism or literature: “is man the helpless victim of transcendental forces or is he a member of a human community in which he can play a part, however small, towards its modification or reform?”¹⁶⁸ The character in body-swap fiction may be subject to volatile abstract forces but he also typically learns that he is an actor in a human-made system of economic asymmetry who can eventually work on behalf of a more equal distribution of resources.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Walter Besant. *Doubts of Dives*. (72)

¹⁶⁷ Bruce Robbins. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good*. (37)

¹⁶⁸ Georg Lukacs. “Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann.” *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*. (80)

¹⁶⁹ In this way, these stories reflect what economist Peter Lindert notes: the transfer of wealth is more likely to occur when there is “self projection” or when voters are financially closer to the next lower occupational group. Early body-swap fiction draws on the concept of self-projection by having the character pass through a state of attenuated consciousness, then experience another’s life, and realize the proximity between the two lives. Yet, early identity exchange fiction can test the limits of poetic justice and by detailing the insufficiency of some plans for resource redistribution.

The peculiar transcendental forces in body-swaps also complicate the idea of reenchantment, the counter-narrative that complements Max Weber's theory that economic rationalism divested the world of its spiritual character. Body-swaps may inject wonder, mystery, and the sacred back into the secular world by resurrecting older belief systems; but the supernatural element is always inflected with rational or desacralizing impulses. In *The Ealing Miracle* (1912), Olive Teversham-Dingle decides that her transformation is a miracle, performed by God-made-flesh in the form of a balding man, so that she can have an extramarital affair.¹⁷⁰ Animism is revived in *Turnabout* (1931) when a sentient Egyptian statue is irritated by the domestic squabbles of its owners and, "with a malicious smile," exchanges their bodies.¹⁷¹ In body-swap stories with a more scientific bent, a desire for reenchantment is palpable in the metaphors that describe how mind and matter connect. In Wells's story, Eden apprehends the wondrous in quotidian terms: "Men have lost their memories before. But to exchange memories as one does umbrellas!"¹⁷² The student in Arthur Conan Doyle's story is horrified by a professor's determination to remove the soul from the body "as you would take the works from a watch."¹⁷³ In *An Exchange of Souls* (1911), Doctor Myas explains the relationship between mind and body in terms of the wires connecting

¹⁷⁰ "...it had been as if the scales had fallen from her eyes; as if she had at last been allowed to perceive the meaning of the miracle/ It was all so straightforward she wondered she had been blind for so long./ She had been changed into Lena Swallow, she told herself, not because she had fallen from grace, but for the reason that it had been decreed she should mate with Jain Spiller." (*The Ealing Miracle*, 205)

¹⁷¹ "And through all these dreams and dim imaginings the figure of Mr. Ram was inextricably woven. The little man had grown to full stature and appeared to be directing the activities of the other figures that peopled the darkness. Occasionally, he would pause to exchange a few words with a group of Egyptian friends and at such times Tim directly saw Mr. Ram's white teeth bared in a malicious smile..." (*Turnabout*, 69)

¹⁷² ("The Late Mr. Elvisham," 66) This is perhaps made more interesting because Wells is primarily known for his materialism, a fact alluded to in the narrative when Eden says: "I have been a materialist for all my thinking life, but here, suddenly, is a clear case of man's detachability from matter." (69)

¹⁷³ "The Great Keimplatz Experiment, 78

telephones.¹⁷⁴ The divine is viewed through the lens of human behavior and the spiritual is described in terms of technological advances. The supernatural and wondrous beliefs that govern the world in these stories, in other words, provide only limited relief from disenchantment.

Straining credulity without providing an escape from the mundane, identity-exchange fiction toggles between realism and romance, not quite fitting within the genres of science fiction or of what has come to be called fantasy. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., the editor of *Science Fiction Studies*, describes science fiction, as against fantasy, as “made to seem not impossible, and consequently closer to felt experiences than flights of fancy, and more permissible to the rational imagination.”¹⁷⁵ Certainly, the methods for effecting identity transformation—often, the most groan-worthy feature of the body-swap—are typically beyond the scope of human achievement. The fervent wishing on a stone, a mesmeric trance, the nighttime intervention by a household statue, or any number of crude mechanisms of identity exchange are not exactly the stuff of rational effort. But the body-swap stories at issue here do not provide what M. Keith Booker calls “creative estrangement,”¹⁷⁶ where distance from the cultural moment is achieved through world-design in fantasy.

Estrangement in early body-swap narratives, by contrast, is not achieved through distance from the author’s reality but rather through its proximity. In *The Doubts of*

¹⁷⁴ “A man at Knightsbridge, wishing to speak to a man in the City, does so through the Telephone Exchange. It seemed to me possible that the soul might constitute a somewhat similar exchange. It might received from the body and convey to the mind, or it might receive from the mind and convey to the body.” (*An Exchange of Souls*, 20)

¹⁷⁵ Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*. In the nearly forty years of publication, *Science Fiction Studies*, which Csicsery-Ronay edited, has not produced articles on identity exchange fiction. The journal is dominated instead by analyses of utopian fiction, apocalyptic tales, and technoculture—subjects that either capture large-scale stakes or entertain viable cultural possibilities.

¹⁷⁶ M. Keith Booker. *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth Century English Novel*. (252)

Dives, Besant categorically rejects the need for complex artifice in scenery or setting:

I give notice that those people who believe what is called the Supernatural requires, even for its most remarkable developments, anything beyond the most commonplace surroundings, had better read no farther, unless, which is too seldom the case, they are prepared on the spot to change their convictions. As everybody knows, who has read the recent works of the more advanced thinkers, it is no longer the romantic surrounding that is wanted. Things most remarkable now take place daily under the most commonplace conditions. Things most unexpected are now developed in simple drawing rooms—nay, one is told, in rooms of clubs. We no longer look to the Moated Grange, the Ruined Abbey, the Deserted Churchyard, for spirits and their companions of the silent world. They come to us in our own houses and in broad daylight.¹⁷⁷

If utopian fiction must be located beyond the borders of the known world, then body-swap fiction often depicts its characters becoming further entrenched in what is already available. Characters, are reimmersed in the present moment but, crucially, experience a new relation to it. Regardless of the object used to effect the transformation, body-swap stories portray events that could be “no closer to [the] felt experiences” in Csicsery-Ronay’s definition of science fiction than, well, felt experiences. The characters rarely get transported to fantastical realms, so the pleasure such stories offer tend to come from their realism. Roger Lancelyn Green explains as much in his defense of *Vice Versa*: “With his first book Anstey conquered and laid open to the world his own particular kingdom: the fantastic treated as the actual, set firmly and fairly in the realistic, and encountered quite seriously and with complete logic.”¹⁷⁸ This is the most crucial facet of the body-swap story: after the fantastical intervention, the individual finds herself immersed in the everyday again--- but an everyday that has been overlooked or ignored.

As a result of the transformation, the character must experience another’s

¹⁷⁷ Walter Besant. *The Doubts of Dives*. (5)

¹⁷⁸ Roger Lancelyn Green. “A Neglected Novelist: ‘F. Anstey.’” *English*. (178)

socioeconomic condition in its totality, complete with the lifelong accretion of bodily sensations (be it through infirmity, years of dissipation, years of deprivation, youthful appetites, and so on)¹⁷⁹; the reader, however, cannot be fully immersed in those same sensations because the image of the character is inaccessible through a dual-construct. The narratologist Mieke Bal writes, that “repetition, accumulation, relations to other characters, and transformations,” are four methods that “construct the image of a character.”¹⁸⁰ In body-swaps, the immediate and drastic transformation disrupts the other three categories because the character is so radically divorced from her body and milieu.¹⁸¹ The narrative thus registers a tension between the acute description of physical sensations and an awareness of the constructedness of the text.

We can see these dynamics at play in two different but equally plausible readings of *Vice Versa*, in which (again) Paul Bultitude at first ignores his son’s pleas to withdraw him from boarding school and then, once he switches bodies with his son, must start the academic term in the boy’s place. Green posits that the fantasy of body-swaps “depends largely on its plot, and on the cunningly contrived discomforts to which characters are subjected in such a way that we are amused by the predicament, held by suspense, but not harrowed unduly by mental suffering.”¹⁸² For Green, there is a fitness in the justice meted out in an identity exchange plot; and in the case of *Vice Versa*, the poetic justice is so perfect that it foregrounds the constructedness of the plot and prevents the reader from strongly identifying with the character or his pain.

¹⁷⁹ “Not since the distant days of my first private school had I been conscious of such a devastating hunger. Peckish is not the word. I felt like a homeless tapeworm.” (*Vice Versa*)

¹⁸⁰ Mieke Bal. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. (126)

¹⁸¹ This is to say that the character becomes an amalgamation: both an old and a young man, a millionaire and a copywriter, a scientist and his assistant, an aristocrat and child star, a father and a son, a married woman and a working class woman, a husband and a wife, and so on.

¹⁸² Roger Lancelyn Green. “A Neglected Novelist: ‘F. Anstey.’” *English*. (178)

But if Green emphasizes the thought-experiment component of the premise, he does not capture the ways in which body-swap fiction is also invested in the problems of embodiment, which Nicholas Tucker articulates in these terms:

For the bullying [Bultitude] meets with still hurts, whether it involves running the gauntlet, kicks in the shins, jabs in the spine, or having his arm twisted round till it is nearly wrenched out of its socket. It is impossible not to sympathise with anyone on the receiving end of this savagery, particularly when Mr. Bultitude's blustering threats to have his tormentors up for assault or bound over to keep the peace are totally futile.¹⁸³

For Tucker, the body switch does not distract the reader from the character's suffering but heightens an awareness of it. Invested in the strange and unsettling experience of inhabiting another person's body, identity exchange fiction amplifies even the most mundane aspects of physical experience and produce uniquely uncomfortable depictions of suffering. Both Tucker's and Green's accounts of *Vice Versa* are plausible on their own but, when compared, they raise questions about body-swaps. Do such stories refuse or invite sympathy? Do they depend more on plot construction or on immersion in experience? Are they abstract thought experiments or opportunities to explore materiality in a new way?

Certainly, the presence of conflicting accounts about the meaning of a literary text is not in and of itself remarkable. One of the arguments of this chapter, though, is that early body-swap fiction elicits such contradictory responses because the stories so often vacillate between engaged and detached modes of writing. If "The Late Mr. Elvisham" demonstrates the potential benefits of confused readerly sympathy in terms of redirecting attention to minor characters, then Horace W. C. Newte's *The Ealing Miracle: A*

¹⁸³ Nicholas Tucker. "Vice Versa: The First Subversive Novel for Children." *Children's Literature in Education*. (56)

Realistic Story (1912) suggest the potential limitations. In the novel, a wealthy woman trades lives with an unemployed nurse so that she can experience the lived effects of class prejudice. The opening chapters present a scathing critique of Olive Teversham-Dingle and the hypocritical attitudes of her friends. Olive hosts a religious assembly meeting, attended by women who, despite a spectrum of physical differences—such as, looking like “a goat” or “as if her face has been flattened by a blow from a fist”—are indistinguishable to the narrator because “to judge from their talk, [they] thought and behaved as one woman, and not a particularly interesting one at that.”¹⁸⁴ In wanting to conform to the “not particularly interesting” feminine standard, Olive prevents an impoverished and pregnant woman from securing a job in the neighborhood: the wealthy woman fears that the nurse, who is acquainted with Olive’s lower-class family members, will expose her class origins. Following the precise accounting of a retributive body-swap story, Olive experiences the hardships her actions would have created for another and discovers that such conditions make it impossible for her to “think and behave” as her religious friends can. In devising a fit punishment for Olive’s thoughtless cruelty, however, the project produces an unfitness. Readerly sympathy eventually transfers to Olive because she must experience the hardships of poverty as a bodily experience. The narrator even discards a previously critical and detached tone in describing that physical pain: “A day came when Olive’s wedding ring stood between her and starvation.”¹⁸⁵

Employing a more charitable tone is not unusual, of course, in stories that feature a reversal of fortune. Body-swap stories are distinctive, however, in that they typically involve multiple tonal shifts. The narrator alternates between satire and empathy at

¹⁸⁴ Horace W. C. Newte. *The Ealing Miracle: A Realistic Story*. (3 and 16)

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. (160)

different moments in the narrative, which accounts for the two contradictory readings of *Vice Versa* and their equal plausibility. And the tonal imbalance, moreover, arises from the exactness and thus constructedness of the punishment. The author identifies the potential source of a particular social injustice, describes that person in a detached manner, subjects her to experience of that social injustice, and ultimately presents a detailed rendering of that lived experience, which brings sympathy to the ostensible source of the problem.¹⁸⁶

Because the catalyst for class sentiment and resource sharing is often an intimate awareness of individual vulnerability, however, body-swaps also suggest a limit to impulses of reform. In his examination of socioeconomic trends from 1880-1930, the economist Peter Lindert contends, that the social transfer of wealth is more likely to occur when there is “self projection” or when voters feel a sense of “social affinity”¹⁸⁷ with those whom the benefits will aid. Lindert explains that social transfers of wealth are supported politically by those who can imagine themselves as likely to need such assistance or who, in essence, “self-insure.”¹⁸⁸ Lindert, however, does not consider what happens when a critical mass of voters can no longer imagine their way into others’ position because economic circumstances improve. Nor does he consider what the limitations of self-projection are in determining redistributive justice. Does self-projection habituate a form of self-preservation and self-protection that then leaves disenfranchised groups in precarious positions if there is an upswing in social mobility?

¹⁸⁶ The difficulty of this style is perhaps underscored because Newte abandons it in his next novel *Pansy*, an instant best seller that follows a more straightforward sympathetic tone by following the adventures of the lower class woman who takes care of Olive in *The Ealing Miracle*.

¹⁸⁷ Peter H. Lindert. *Growing Public*. (22)

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. (12)

Early body-swap fiction obviously does not refer to Lindert's self-projection directly, of course, but it does present the concept, in a manner of speaking, by having characters experience the lives of people whose labor has gone unrecognized. In each story, the characters also pass through a state of attenuated consciousness, daydreaming, or concentrated mental projection in order to effect the transition into another character's life—thereby, mimicking the imaginative work of self-projection. And these stories suggest, in part because they so often return characters to their original bodies, that if imaginative self-projection is the primary motor for redistribution of wealth, then the dynamics of self-protection, which initiate the desire to assist those in the strata below, may eventually lead to a denial of or limit to that assistance.

Still: however a given body-swap fiction may conclude, the mode clearly makes use of the everyday to inspire thinking about social inequality, about differences in resources and social position. Rita Felski writes that the “[The everyday] is unsurpassable in the sense that we can never jump outside our own skins in order to become conscious of everything that makes our thoughts and actions possible.”¹⁸⁹ Body-swap fiction tries to transcend that limit. In the attempt, the authors do not disclose all the material conditions that structure individual characters' lives, but they do reveal how the body is subject to the rhythms of the everyday and, importantly, how inhabitants of different bodily configurations—especially compromised ones—experience the everyday differently. This echoes what Henri Lefebvre considers to be the radical potentiality of the everyday, its indication that the needs of the working class do not differ from the needs of the bourgeoisie, its implication “that an eventual and certainly *possible* social

¹⁸⁹ Rita Felski. “Introduction.” Special edition about the Everyday in *New Literary History* (14)

transformation might come from the pressure brought by needs more than by absolute poverty, want and pauperization.”¹⁹⁰ Part thought-experiment and part exercise in embodiment, identity exchange fiction would seem to facilitate thinking in this vein. It foregrounds the needs of the body and a sense that identity can be organized around supporting those needs—as in Cotterel’s realization after his swap:

I have no desire to work. I want love, fellowship, play, talk, music, wine, sunshine, woods, lawns, and pleasant places. These simple things make up life; but mostly love, fellowship, and play—I ask for nothing more. I want, I say, to be happy. Build me a system of economics upon that foundation. Let work be only necessary work, and play the thing to which it leads.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Henri Lefebvre. *Critique of Everyday Life: Vol. 2*. Translated by John Moore. (63)

¹⁹¹ Walter Besant. *The Doubts of Dives*. (32)

Chapter Two: Utopia and Exodus in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*

It is a critical commonplace to designate *Herland* (1915), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's baffling work of speculative fiction about a remote society of women whose lineage is secured through asexual reproduction, a feminist utopia. In effectively constructing an elaborate and alternative course of history, which entails a set of principles organized around an uncontested form of matriarchy, Gilman provides several vantage points for evaluating and critiquing patriarchal culture. Frederic Jameson includes the novel in his survey of utopian fiction as "the most dramatic of those realizations" of "the freedom to project different alien worlds structured by feminist principles or values."¹⁹² Christopher Wilson claims that the novel offers "a mythological Archimedean standing point" from which the inadequacies of patriarchal values become visible, demonstrating how "female agility counterpoints and defeats the knowledge, temptations, and 'advances' of masculine exploit."¹⁹³ Kathi Weeks describes it as an "exercise in denaturalization" that encourages readers to envision how "the limits of the possible in gender matters are less narrow than we think."¹⁹⁴ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar even claim that Gilman sees herself as rejuvenated by the fantastical story:

The daughters of *Herland* are thus fittingly called "New Women" not only because they embody Gilman's vision of a female coming of age at the beginning of the twentieth century; not only because they represent Gilman's version of herself, now adequately nurtured and nurturing; but also because the tensions of turn-of-the-century feminism are reflected so clearly in the world she imagines.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Frederic Jameson. *Archaeologies of the Future*. (137)

¹⁹³ Christopher P. Wilson. "Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Steady Burghers: the Terrain of *Herland*," *Women's Studies*. (271)

¹⁹⁴ Kathi Weeks. *The Problem with Work*. (15)

¹⁹⁵ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. *No Man's Land, Vol. 2: Sexchanges*. (81-82)

Gilbert and Gubar emphasize how the political stakes of her novel are personal, written from a position of disempowerment that is also part of a shared cultural experience.

It is inarguable that the novel is subtended by dreams of solidarity, specifically around women's rights—and I would add, around labor practices more broadly. A turn away from capitalism's valorization of productive value and waged work towards a recuperation of socially reproductive labor is at the very heart of the novel. Despite the strangeness punctuating the cultural and genealogical history of the Herlanders, Gilman highlights the various improvements, by turns fantastical and achievable, that are possible when the status of motherhood is elevated and when women are allowed greater participation in society. Gilman foregrounds what Nancy Fraser calls "the background conditions of capitalism" or the surplus capacities and "nonmarketized social relations" on which markets depend, including environmental resources, domestic labor, and political participation.¹⁹⁶ Gilman offers an image of an aspirational society not least in that the Herlanders consider affective labor, communicative labor, domestic work, ecological stewardship, and caring work to be meaningful. By acknowledging these forms of labor as essential to social life, the Herlanders strengthen relationships both intragenerationally and intergenerationally. Universal education, healthcare, nourishment, and participation in local council politics are so naturalized that Ellador, one of the citizens of Herland, cannot enter into the structure of feeling associated with the absence of these rights. When a visitor to the remote land describes the unresolved social problems of America at the turn of the century, "it made no more impression on her than it would to tell a South Sea Islander about the temperature of the Arctic Circle.

¹⁹⁶ Nancy Fraser. "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode." *The New Left Review*. (85)

She could intellectually see that it was bad to have those things; but she could not *feel* it.”¹⁹⁷ By denaturalizing the primacy of wage labor, Gilman illuminates the normative conditions that structure the economic and political imaginary in terms of the labor that counts.

Yet there are senses in which the utopic promise of the novel remains unfulfilled by its conclusion. And where scholars have noted these, they have intimated that the flaws are symptomatic of ideological limitations that Gilman cannot herself perceive. Criticism of *Herland* in this vein tends to organize around problems of oppressive social uniformity or the threat of exclusion, as in Kathi Weeks’ reference to the “stifling harmony of homogenous sisterhood” or Thomas Peyser’s identification of a racist and nationalist agenda underpinning that homogeneity, where “collective action...overrides any individual objections—or rather, collective action that arises spontaneously from rigorously like-minded citizens—has an unquestioned worth.”¹⁹⁸ The novel, so the argument goes, presents an idealized vision of a female-centered society that the author personally desires, but this vision is in certain respects ideologically conflicted. A related line of criticism simply suggests that Gilman’s didacticism and moralizing in pursuit of social objectives cloud her artistic vision and limit her dexterity in capturing the complexity of social ills. Ann Lane, for example, insists that “Gilman gave little attention to her writing as literature, and neither will the reader, I’m afraid. She wrote quickly, carelessly, to make a point.”¹⁹⁹ These critics suggest that Gilman’s didacticism and

¹⁹⁷ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (134)

¹⁹⁸ Kathi Weeks. *The Problem with Work*; Thomas Peyser. *Utopia and Cosmopolis*. (83)

¹⁹⁹ Ann Lane. *To Herland and Beyond: The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. (15)

moralizing in pursuit of social objectives cloud her artistic vision and limit her dexterity in capturing the complexity of social ills.

Yet such reading flattens the work and loses the richness of Gilman's critique. Rather than engage in a debate about whether certain aesthetic strategies are privileged over direct sociopolitical writing, I will argue here that the novel is not entirely utopic, or rather that Gilman engages with some of the contradictions in utopian fiction precisely because her own position in society was so vexed. In order to do so, I will draw on critical discussions of utopia that contend that aspects of unease and estrangement are a strength of the genre.²⁰⁰ Nicole Pohl, for example, argues that while utopian fiction can enable readers to imagine how certain abstract political principles will be felt and embodied, it will not necessarily engender a comfortable experience: "What utopias as a fundamentally experimental and transformative genre reveal is the paradox between ideal and lived space, between ideology and social practices."²⁰¹ Frederic Jameson concludes that utopian fiction should not be read as "blueprints for bourgeois comfort" but as "maps and plans to be read negatively, as what is to be accomplished after the demolitions and the removals, and in the absence of all those lesser evils the liberals believed to be inherent in human nature."²⁰² The undercurrents that disturb the crystalline waters of Gilman's utopia, therefore, may not be the unintentional byproducts of a limited political agenda or a careless writing practice.

²⁰⁰ Against critiques mounted by Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, post-modernist scholars on subjectivity formation and post-colonial scholars who have noted the historical conditions of periphery, there has been a recuperation of totality as a conceptual framework that note the internal contradictions within totality by Alberto Toscano, Jeff Kinkle, Kojin Karatani, among others.

²⁰¹ Nicole Pohl. *Women, Space and Utopia, 1600-1800*. (2)

²⁰² Frederic Jameson. *Archaeologies of the Future*. (12)

And indeed I argue that, by reversing the foreground-background relations of capitalism, Gilman reveals what Fraser describes as “the view of capitalism as an institutionalized social order,” complete with its internal instabilities “that helps us understand how a critique of capitalism is possible from within it.”²⁰³ Gilman designs dystopic elements of exclusion and homogeneity into Herland and thus produces an immanent critique of utopia, where the “demolitions and removals” are at the level of the text. While I am persuaded by claims that Gilman’s racist and nationalist allegiances prevent her from positing a truly utopian space, I argue that she also alludes to flaws in her fictitious political system in order to mark how collective action is a process that requires constant interrogation, not an outcome of “unquestioned worth.” By interweaving the dangers of exclusion and conformity into the fabric of utopia, Gilman draws attention to the social conditions of labor valuation and devaluation.

By homing in on the more troubling aspects of the plot, we can see that Herland is no simple, idyllic retreat.²⁰⁴ A trio of male explorers—including a sociologist, a doctor, and the wealthy adventurer who finances the excursion—learn from a South American guide about an inaccessible, isolated society run entirely by women. Flying over Herland, the men draw the attention of the greater citizenry but, when they land, are only greeted by three young women. Terry O. Nicholson, the financier, provokes one of the girls, and eventually a crowd of women amasses, in ever-increasing numbers, to subdue the men physically. Waking from an anesthetic, the men discover that their method of escape has been confiscated and that they are under constant surveillance. During their

²⁰³ Nancy Fraser. “Behind Marx’s Hidden Abode.” *The New Left Review*. (86)

²⁰⁴ In drawing attention to the contradictions at the level of text, as well as subtext, I also draw on Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best’s work on “surface reading.”

imprisonment, the men are barred from work of any kind and have all their food and clothing provided by the Herlanders. Gradually, they are tutored on the strange history of the Herlanders, as well as on the social and technological improvements engineered there. The most striking peculiarity of the origin story they hear is that, when all chances for reproduction were rendered impossible at the dawn of Herland, one woman gave birth to a daughter through asexual reproduction. All Herlanders are, therefore, descended from the same female ancestor and certain members of the population are selected to reproduce via parthenogenesis. Motherhood, then, becomes a contradictory concept: it is both a highly selective and honored vocation for which one is chosen and a unilateral title shared by all women. Only a few women, who possess the most desirable traits—unidentified in the narrative—are encouraged to “will” a new life into the world; the Herlanders, nevertheless, consider themselves a nation of mothers because the role of nurturing and raising children is shared by all.

The Herlanders are concerned that the male interlopers might be violent, but they also hope that they will prove suitable fathers of a new race of children. When the men are “sufficiently tamed and trained,”²⁰⁵ they are given opportunities to circulate among the wider Herland population. Although the men entertain fantasies of polyamory, the social elders pair them with the girls they first meet—Alima, Ellador, and Celis—in monogamous, arranged marriages. Despite the encouragements to assimilate, Terry balks at the never-ending surveillance, as well as his unconsummated marriage. He not only orchestrates an escape attempt midway through the novel but also attempts to rape his wife when she does not offer consent. After his violent outburst, the community of

²⁰⁵ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The YellowWall-paper, and Selected Writings* (74)

women again amass in large numbers to subdue him and he is exiled for his punishment. Jeff, the physician, is allowed to stay in Herland because he has fathered a child with his wife. The novel ends abruptly with the sociologist Van Jennings describing his rushed flight from Herland with Terry in restraints and Ellador, Van's wife, joining them so that she can perform a sociological analysis of America.

By foregrounding the male characters' arrests, imprisonment, escape, and recapture, the novel counterbalances utopic qualities with dystopic ones. On this point, we might revisit Jameson's claim that, in classic utopias, there is a "systemic perspective for which it is obvious that whatever threatens the system as such must be excluded: this is indeed the basic premise of all modern anti-Utopias."²⁰⁶ The system's preference is highly visible in *Herland* in that two of the three male characters are essentially exiled and a proportion of the women within the society are barred from biological motherhood. We can easily grant that Gilman creates a female utopia, which the male characters find estranging, in order to denaturalize certain affective relationships and habitual thinking under patriarchy. What is less noted, however, is that Gilman also authorizes the male experience of estrangement in order to maintain a critical vantage point within the text. The male characters emblemize both patriarchal oppression and, over the course of the plot, the experience of marginalization: the hardships they endure, therefore, are retributive *and also* diagnostic of the residual problems in Herland. There is, for example, the troubling ease with which Van learns to internalize gender-based assumptions in Herland. Gilman suggests that, while the Herlanders may have corrected for certain biases of patriarchy, they have not removed the conditions of structural

²⁰⁶ Frederic Jameson. *Archaeologies of the Future*. (205)

inequality.

I argue that *Herland* is ideologically unstable because Gilman conceives of the fictitious country, as well as the American economy, in terms of a whole system of transactions and labor forces, and yet is simultaneously invested in the psychological experience of marginalization within systems. Her feminist commitments create a double bind, where she wants not only to design full-scale structural alterity but also to preserve avenues for exiting that utopia. Gilman depicts how the male characters are repulsed by aspects of Herland culture in order to isolate both their resistance to dismantling patriarchal privilege *and* to draw attention to the ways that Herland is not entirely transparent in terms of its economic hierarchy. At the start of the novel, each of the male characters expresses a different aspect of patriarchal oppression: Van is associated with the discriminatory biases of scientific rationalism, Jeff with “the angel in the house” ideology, and Terry with brutal oppression. Given how insidious and damaging these dispositions can be, Gilbert and Gubar interpret their punishments as fair:

...the men suffer from culture shock when they are treated like the minority they, in fact, are. Secondary creatures, they are pushed around like cattle, drugged like criminals, bedded down like babies, soothed like invalids, instructed like schoolboys, and put on display as anatomical curiosities marketable only for matrimony....as Gilman humorously diagnoses the faults ascribed to her own sex as symptoms of a disease called marginalization.²⁰⁷

Gilbert and Gubar read such actions as unambiguous: the mistreatment is a form of delicious poetic justice where the oppressor becomes the oppressed.

This litany of psychological and physical deprivations, though, should give us pause. The men may begin as the perpetrators of abuses in a gender-based hierarchy, but

²⁰⁷ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. *No Man's Land, Vol. 2: Sexchanges*. (73)

their experiences too closely mirror those of marginalized subjects under such a hierarchy; the poetic justice even relies heavily on physical retribution that divides moral outrage from its target. This permits readers to identify sympathetically with the male characters, or with their position, at the very least, which then complicates the question of how the novel's utopic schematics should be interpreted. The three male characters become composites, representing both the victors and victims of the system; much like characters in body-swaps, they are internally coherent but register as amalgamations or as fluid representations of identity from the perspective of the narrative. And as in the turn-of-the-century identity exchange novels, there is a confusion about readerly sympathy: Gilman identifies a potential source for a particular social injustice (in this case, the patriarchal attitude), then subjects the male characters to the experience of that injustice, and ultimately presents a more engaged rendering of that lived experience, which brings sympathy to the ostensible source of the problem. The divided representation of the male characters reflects the contradictions of the novel, which offers visions of relief and revenge, sanctuary and captivity, a new social order and an oppressive totality.

If Gilman's biography furnishes evidence of a personal investment in realizing the structural reforms of Herland, then it also suggests that she might maintain a critical distance on the project. One can easily believe that an impetus for the novel was to imagine conditions that would prevent other women from assessing their own lives as Gilman did, regretting her "wretched limitations" and "this miserable condition of mind, this darkness, feebleness and gloom."²⁰⁸ Her biography suggests that she was personally invested in the communal childrearing and opportunities for professionalization available

²⁰⁸ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography*. (97)

to the women of Herland: abandoned first by her father and then by her mother, who could not financially support the family, Gilman found one of the “wretched limitations” of her life to be that of reenacting those painful family dynamics when she became a mother herself. Suffering from a bout of post-partum depression after the birth of her daughter, Gilman was prescribed “the rest cure,” a prolonged and forced retirement, interrupted by only two hours of intellectual activity a day. Her health eventually improved, but the breakdown led her to abandon her husband and child for a career in writing. As wrenching as the decision was to separate from her husband, Gilman regretted not extricating herself sooner because her postpartum depression led to a lifetime fear of her own insanity or what she called “nerve bankruptcy.”²⁰⁹ She attributed her hesitation and unnecessary deliberation to “the rigid stoicism and constant effort in character-building of my youth; I was ‘over-trained’ and had wasted my substance in riotous—virtues.”²¹⁰ We may wonder, then whether Gilman can uncritically admire Herland’s platforms of vocational specialization in early childhood, of exercises in “trained thought” as a part of religious life, and of stifling forms of mandated character-building.²¹¹

In this vein, we may note an uncomfortable resemblance between Gilman’s utopic paradise and the celebrated short story that draws on the most debilitating period of her life. In “The Yellow Wall-paper,” an unnamed female narrator, suffering from postpartum depression, is confined to a room in a secluded country manor. Denied social contact and barred from doing any work, she becomes unhealthily fascinated with marks

²⁰⁹ Ibid. (97)

²¹⁰ Ibid. (98)

²¹¹ Ibid. (114)

on the wallpaper of the title, convinced that the pattern depicts grotesqueries, staring eyes, and a woman trapped behind bars. Trying to “free” the woman in the wallpaper, she tears the room apart and, in the process, violently attacks her husband. I want to suggest that by extending the private home of “The Yellow Wall-paper” to the boundaries of the utopic nation, Gilman corrects for the gender-based oppression in the story *and* simultaneously subjects certain characters to the same punishment. Terry, the clear villain of *Herland*, is thus linked to the female protagonist of the short story in his struggles with confinement and isolation. His desperation, suicidal ideation, and violence are deeply problematic in the text, but Gilman also reveals how his response is calibrated to the various oppressions of the cultural environment. Moreover, we may consider that the desire to leave utopia does more than expose how entrenched patriarchal privilege can be: Terry’s attempt to orchestrate a flight out of captivity is described primarily in terms of the joy and fellow-feeling it produces among the other two inmates. The camaraderie among the men, in their escape from the oppression of systemic inequalities, cannot be dismissed as pure satire: in their dual function, the male characters also represent victims of a gender hierarchy, so that to scorn their bond would be to implicate female solidarity.

Gilman, in other words, cannot devise social totality without also validating a suspicion of totality. This intuitively makes sense, given that her larger project is to excavate the domestic and socially reproductive labors that are otherwise subordinated to wage labor and productive value. Gilman organizes the Herland economy around motherhood, the one form of labor that she claims in *Women and Economics* would be “revolting” if monetized, in order to deny the primacy of waged labor.²¹² Yet as useful as

²¹² Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Women and Economics*. (12)

it is to posit an alternate economic system that denaturalizes assumptions about labor valuation, Gilman suggests too that honing the critical faculties to recognize how labor can be made structurally subordinate is an ongoing process, one that requires constant vigilance and is not complete with substitution of one system for another. The tension between the competing desires of structural alterity and of preserving pathways of escape is crucial in understanding Gilman's analysis of professionalization and labor.

The ability to perceive the labor processes behind the world of objects is possible *precisely* because the Herlanders and the Americans perceive each other as a threat. During their first aerial survey of Herland to assess potential dangers, Van claims that "here was evidently a people highly skilled, efficient, caring for their country as a florist cares for his costliest orchids" and Terry deduces from the landscape that "they've got architects and landscape gardeners in plenty, that's sure."²¹³ Utopia, when experienced by an interloper, requires a consideration of what work goes into the society, and this awareness is only heightened during the men's attempted escape. Feeling safe in the woods because of the country's lack of predators, and sated by the abundance of fruit-bearing trees, the men find that these very comforts trigger concern: "Jeff thoughtfully suggested that that very thing showed how careful we should have to be, as we might run into some stalwart group of gardeners or foresters or nut-gatherers at any minute."²¹⁴ The characters and, by extension, the reader are required to anticipate labor where it is not visible and to imagine the workers who build the world described in the novel.

The threat posed by the male characters also leads the Herlanders to perform a similar intellectual task: they attempt to reverse-engineer details about America based on

²¹³ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (20)

²¹⁴ *Ibid.* (43)

the men's description of social life, commodities, professions, and common objects. At the end of the novel, Van reflects, "Little had we thought that our careful efforts at concealment had been so easily seen through, with never a word to show us that they saw. They had followed up words of ours on the science of optics, asked innocent questions about glasses and the like, and were aware of the defective eyesight so common among us."²¹⁵ The Herlanders determine that they are not willing to open their borders because they can perceive what social ills are present in American society, and they achieve this understanding by examining what work is prevalent and what labors are suppressed. The novel, therefore, facilitates a constant evaluation and reevaluation of the labor that supports social life, as well as of the hierarchy of material and immaterial processes prevailing in different cultural contexts. Rather than focusing solely on how women's work is taken for granted, Gilman posits that the logic of erasure is diffuse and that anxiety about devalued work is shared across genders. And by exploring these anxieties, she offers strategies that could be useful to professionals and others at the turn of the century—strategies for improving and reforming systems structurally, and with insights emerging from disempowered perspectives.

"A Not Unnatural Enterprise"

It is evident that *Herland* serves as a template for denaturalizing concepts about gender and gender relations from the heading of the first chapter: "A not unnatural enterprise." The title, with its use of the double negative, is both critiquing and anticipating of critique, coy and ambiguous. It may describe the content of the chapter by acknowledging that many heterosexual men might be seduced by the concept of a harem

²¹⁵ Ibid. (142)

society, as Terry describes Herland; it can ironically note the imperialist impulses of the adventure genre;²¹⁶ it may hint that the political principles of Herland are a legitimate invitation to policy reform; it could index the forms of asexual reproduction found in nature that make parthenogenesis seem feasible; and, finally, it could be a playful nod to the genre of utopia, a tactic to situate the oddities of *Herland* within precedents of the form. The phrase, however, accretes an entirely different meaning by the conclusion of the novel, when Van describes a period of peak satisfaction in Herland: “We had as yet no work, so we hung about [our wives] in their forest tasks; that was natural, too.”²¹⁷ The moment is both celebratory, in its suggestion that male resistance to female political agency can be overcome, and dispiriting, in that Van accepts that his work will be “naturally” circumscribed because of his marginalized position in a gender hierarchy. Considering that the men would likely prevent their wives from doing publically recognized work in America, there is poetic justice in being denied similar opportunities in Herland; but that justice is perhaps meted out too perfectly, replicating conditions rather than subverting them. Nor, surely, is it coincidence that Van’s marginalization emerges through work: as Kathi Weeks argues, “work is organized by gender,” not only because labor is differentiated by gender, both in the domestic sphere and in the valuation of wages, but also because “workers are often expected to do gender at work.”²¹⁸

Not authorized to participate fully in Herland society, Van nevertheless finds meaningful work there at times and his retrospective narration reveals his management of

²¹⁶ This is essentially Christopher Wilson’s argument: “That is, her fiction often consciously lobbied to overturn her reader’s preconceptions about what was ‘natural’ or desirable in a work of literature—principally by frustrating the ideological expectations of the literature of ‘adventure’ and ‘romance’ from her era.” Christopher P. Wilson. “Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s steady burghers: the terrain of *Herland*.” (273)

²¹⁷ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (97)

²¹⁸ Kathi Weeks. *The Problem of Work*. (82)

emotions when that work is also eventually suppressed. He copes with confinement and builds relationships with his captors by drawing on his professional habitus of observing the behavioral, cultural, and material differences of the Herlanders.²¹⁹ The value of his sociological research, which structures his daily experience of imprisonment, is evident throughout the text. It is therefore curious that critics have said little about the first lines of the novel, which indicate that the Herlanders have stripped Van of his research:

This is written from memory, unfortunately. If I could have brought with me the material I so carefully prepared, this would be a very different story. Whole books full of notes, carefully copied records, firsthand descriptions, and the pictures—that's the worst loss. We had some bird's-eyes of the cities and parks; a lot of lovely views of streets, of buildings, outside and in, and some of those gorgeous gardens, and, most important of all, of the women themselves.²²⁰

The critic Christopher Wilson puts this censorship in a positive light, arguing that it prevents Van from packaging Herland culture in clinical terms or presenting the women primarily in the visual register. Unable to rely on the habits of attention and analysis structured by his profession, Van must devise new methods of communicating his experiences, which Wilson sees as beneficial: “It is even more intriguing how the narrator complains of being dispossessed of his tools of explanation. The women and land are unable to be seen, and moreover, to be surveyed and described.”²²¹

While I grant that Van does not have recourse to professional detachment, Wilson's interpretation precludes commentary on the censorship itself or on the

²¹⁹ Van suggests that their professional orientations allow each character to acclimatize to the new society—Jeff's medical training provides him with a less restrictive sense of gender identity and Van adjusts because he can practice his sociological craft: “...Jeff was getting on excellent terms with his tutor, and even his guards, and so was I. It interested me profoundly to note and study the subtle difference between these women and other women, and try to account for them.” Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (32)

²²⁰ Ibid. (3)

²²¹ Christopher P. Wilson. “Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Steady Burghers: the Terrain of *Herland*.” (282)

psychological experience of marginalized work. Deprived of his notes, Van must reconstruct his observations from dim recollections, and thus the novel is a testament to labor lost. Presumably, painstaking research lies behind many of his insights; and so his edited ethnography participates in a broader meditation about how work is also a social construct that can be valued, undervalued, suppressed, or concealed. On this point, we might also add that the social utility of Van's work is paradoxically confirmed in its erasure. The Herlanders implicitly valorize his efforts because they are so ostentatious about their own research: "[The Herlanders] never expressed horror or disapproval, nor indeed much surprise—just a keen interest. And the notes they made!—miles of them!" The recordkeeping, it is revealed in the final chapter, enables the Herlanders to penetrate the strategies of misdirection, omission, and idealization the Americans use to conceal the flaws of their own society. Under the guise of language training and casual conversations, the Herlanders extract enough information to map out the globe, chart the hierarchies of various civilizations, create a diagnostic manual for illnesses, and approximate the concepts of poverty and crime. Without his notes, Van cannot mount an equally thorough evaluation of the Herland society.²²²

The imprecise retrospective narrative, moreover, creates suspense through one's first reading of the novel and then lays out a series of interpretative problems for a second reading. By foregrounding the lost notes, the story builds anticipation around Van's narrative choices. How will he recreate the "bird's-eyes of the cities and parks" without his intricate sketches: that is to say, what details will he remember and why? Deprived of

²²² This is consistent with Gilman's stance toward sociological analysis, outlined in *Women and Economics*: "Without the power of complete analysis, without knowledge of the sociological data essential to such analysis, we have sweepingly condemned as a whole what we could easily see was so allied with pain and loss." Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Women and Economics*. (15)

his sociological records, Van instead draws on the conventions of suspense by withholding the outcome of the story's central conflict. He does this by setting expectations about how the three male characters will fare in an all-female society. Despite his hints that the Herlanders will prefer his more rigorous scientific perspective because of their professed celebration of the critic and inventor, they eventually grant permanent citizenship to Jeff, a character largely ignored throughout the narrative. Once the outcome is revealed, though, the reader must retroactively question why Terry is apportioned so much narrative attention and Jeff so little. Martha Nussbaum explains that novels are a "morally controversial form" because they implicitly reinforce a normative stance: "It tells readers to notice this and not this, to be active in these and not those ways. It leads them into certain postures of the mind and heart and not others."²²³ Gilman more explicitly invites the reader to ask why Van "tells the readers to notice this and not that." Why does Van frame the edenic qualities of Herland, at the start, by detailing how his research materials are confiscated? If the society is so admirable, then why is so much narrative energy devoted to the male explorers' failed attempt to escape Herland? If the story has a clear villain, why does Van foreground Terry's positive qualities and why does he not foreground Jeff, whom the Herlanders admire?

The Herlanders' censorship renders Van an unreliable narrator, at least to some extent. When he describes the foreign land, he chafes at his inability to remember certain details, as well as his difficulty in constructing an accurate chronology of events.²²⁴ He

²²³ Martha Nussbaum. *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. (2)

²²⁴ "We saw—I can't remember now how much of this we noted then and how much was supplemented by our later knowledge, but we could not help seeing this much, even on the excited day—a land in a state of perfect cultivation, where even the forests looked as if they were cared for; a land that looked like an enormous park, only it was even more evidently an enormous garden." Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings* (13)

questions whether his reminiscences are compromised by nostalgia, by his married contentment, and by his more complete knowledge of the society following his imprisonment. It appears that the men are under surveillance for a year and under heavy guard for nine of those months. Although Van describes how “weeks ran into months” in captivity, it is doubtful that the passage of time would seem as insignificant when recorded in “whole books full of notes.”²²⁵ “The Yellow Wall-paper,” which offers something more like a real-time description of compulsory leisure and excessive confinement, provides a useful contrast: “I did write for a while in spite of them; but it *does* exhaust me a good deal—having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.”²²⁶ The similar sensibility of the two texts suggest that, although Van’s lingering suspicions about the utopia reveal how ingrained the patriarchal mindset can be, his concerns can also contain a legitimate critique of the seemingly idyllic country.

Van does not directly describe the confiscation of materials as censorship but his dissatisfaction is nonetheless intimated. This becomes a pattern in the novel. Although the story ostensibly enumerates the benefits of Herland culture, the narrative is punctuated by his obliquely negative commentary about acclimatizing to the society. Van’s style is understandable during the initial capture, when the outnumbered men must submit to confinement: “But once inside that building, there was no knowing what these determined ladies might do to us. Even a peaceful detention was not to our minds, and when we named it imprisonment it looked even worse.”²²⁷ Having underestimated the

²²⁵ Ibid. (35)

²²⁶ The quote continues: “I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition and I confess it always makes me feel bad. So I will let it alone and talk about the house.” (original emphasis, 167)

²²⁷ Ibid. (23)

women's defense capabilities, the explorers determine that diplomacy can be their only counter-measure; calling "imprisonment" by another name, therefore, is a strategy for maintaining civility. Once in prison, he describes how they conform to the schedule of activities by shifting terms and internalizing expectations: "Oh yes, we took part all right! It wasn't absolutely compulsory, but we thought it better to please."²²⁸ The need to self-censor, however, does not abate even nine months later, when the men are granted the opportunity to lecture about American society to the wider Herland population. Van may use the official terminology of lectureship, but he also touches on the alienating aspects of experience: "we were at last brought out and—exhibited (I hate to call it that, but that's what it was)..."²²⁹ Barring the brief aside, Van neither examines the exhibition proceedings nor attempts to determine what systemic causes contribute to his feelings of alienation. In his parenthetical remark, Van indicates that he is aware that the lectures are a pretense in order to display him as a curiosity or a tamed animal: yet he qualifies the remark by indicating that he hates to identify the experience in that way.

Van credits his eventual integration into Herland culture to his wife Ellador, explicitly stating that he "ceased to feel a stranger, a prisoner" with her. But he remains dissatisfied with his marriage and with the way it serves as precedent for a nascent social institution.²³⁰ Immediately following his most rapturous sentiments about Ellador and her countrywomen, he chafes at the ever-present monitoring of the couples: "We were free—but there was a string to it."²³¹ Beyond the constant surveillance, Van does not feel that the Americans are fully members of Herland society: "Perhaps it seems rather cold-

²²⁸ Ibid. (34)

²²⁹ Ibid. (89)

²³⁰ Ibid. (91)

²³¹ Ibid. (99)

blooded to say ‘we’ and ‘they,’ as if we were not separate couples, with our separate joys and sorrows, but our positions as aliens drove us together constantly.”²³² The three couples live in a compound, set apart from the main public buildings, and each person has his or her own bedroom and bathroom, per Herland custom. The men wish either to share living quarters with their wives or to separate from the other couples into private homes, and both of these requests are denied without debate. And here again, the two representational functions of the male characters complicate how the scene is interpreted: either it is poetic justice that Van must adapt to his wife’s traditions or the Herlanders have created an institution as problematic as marriage in early twentieth-century America.

Gilman critiques Van for his latent desire to control his wife as his legal rights in American society would allow, but she also authorizes his feelings of dissatisfaction under the power asymmetry in Herland. Van may no longer be “a stranger, a prisoner,” but he is not at ease in his new community, nor does he feel as though his needs are accommodated. His dissatisfaction persists long after he leaves Herland: “I can see clearly and speak calmly about this now, writing after a lapse of years, years full of growth and education, but at the time it was rather hard sledding for all of us....”²³³ Even though Van recognizes that his expectations of marriage are rooted in the systemic gender inequality of America, his marital frustrations are acute for years afterward. And yet, unwilling or unable to examine feelings of alienation in Herland that do not stem from his patriarchal expectations, Van cannot convincingly trace the systemic roots of

²³² Ibid. (121)

²³³ Ibid. (120) It is worth noting that Jeff is included in this assessment.

those emotions. The reader is required to evaluate the culture and tease out its contradictions—a process that becomes more pressing given the novel's conclusion.

Gilman solicits readerly participation by exaggerating Van's gaps in knowledge about his fellow explorers: Van overlooks Jeff, who is accepted into Herland society, and foregrounds his admiration of Terry, who ends up expelled because of a violent crime. On a first reading of the novel, Van seems authorized in his criticisms of Jeff because he identifies how the doctor puts "such rose-colored halos on his womenfolks" and holds quaint, idealistic, and patronizing assumptions about matriarchy²³⁴: his Southern code of chivalry seems as problematic as Van's scientific assumptions about gender difference and Terry's more violent and sexual appetites. Jeff, nevertheless, acclimates to Herland so well that he is permitted to father a child in a country where parenting is the highest honor. Despite these indicators of his value to the Herlanders, Van neither notices Jeff's development nor believes that there is even a transformation to track. Van does call Jeff a "traitor"²³⁵ for admiring the disciplinary measures that are used against them²³⁶ but otherwise tends to treat Jeff as an extension of himself, noting how both he and Jeff adapt to Herland better than Terry.²³⁷ When Jeff successfully consummates his marriage and impregnates his wife, Van dismisses these achievements by calling the doctor a "born worshipper"²³⁸ whose marriage is successful only because he treats his wife as he does all

²³⁴ "Jeff was a tender soul. I think he thought that country—if there was one—was just blossoming with roses and babies and canaries and tidies, and all that sort of thing." Ibid. (5)

²³⁵ "As a matter of fact, we began to feel Jeff something of a traitor—he so often flopped over and took their side of things; also his medical knowledge gave him a different point of view somehow." Ibid. (53)

²³⁶ Jeff: "They've given us a room—with no great possibility of escape—and personal liberty—heavily chaperoned. It's better than we'd have been likely to get in man-country." Ibid. (30)

²³⁷ "But Jeff was getting on excellent terms with his tutor, and even his guards, and so was I. It interested me profoundly to note and study the subtle difference between these women and other women, and try to account for them." (32) "Terry was moody as the days passed. He seemed to mind our confinement more than Jeff or I did..." (32) "Jeff and I found it all amusing to watch." (75)

²³⁸ Ibid. (139)

women: “He accepted the Angel theory, swallowed it whole, tried to force it on us—with varying effect.”²³⁹ The reader then wonders whether Jeff truly abandons his notions of chivalry or not.

If Jeff does evolve over the course of the novel, why does that transformation occur off-stage and, if his transformation is more gradual, then why is he allowed to stay? Why, in other words, does Van ignore Jeff’s character arc for Terry’s? A potential rationale for the unequal distribution of narrative attention is made available by a passage from *No Man’s Land* partly quoted above, where Gilbert and Gubar analyze how the Herlanders force a rivalry among the male characters:

Considered inferior for their gender-related secondary sexual characteristics such as combativeness and competitiveness, they become petulant, irritable, jealous, vain of their physical appearance, and rivalrous for approval, as Gilman humorously diagnoses the faults ascribed to her own sex as symptoms of a disease called marginalization.²⁴⁰

An obvious example of this dynamic occurs during the events leading up to their lecture circuit: when the men are finally released from their heavily guarded captivity after nine months, they fight over a mirror and rudimentary styling implements in order to groom their overgrown beards. However, Gilbert and Gubar’s assessment of the scene overlooks the ways in which Van and Jeff have been “rivalrous for approval” from the novel’s start. The two characters already express symptoms of what they call the “disease called marginalization” before they even arrive in Herland. Not only do they share a subtle rivalry for Terry’s approval, they also struggle to assert the value of their different professional specialties. In other words, the novel is an exploration of how Van negotiates changing power structures and allegiances as much as it is a social critique of

²³⁹ Ibid. (122)

²⁴⁰ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. *No Man’s Land, Vol. 2: Sexchanges*. (73)

systems and a travelogue through an imaginary landscape.

Even before they arrive in Herland, Van frames Jeff as less deserving of narrative attention than Terry. During the initial voyage to South America, Van describes the three men as having “a good deal in common,” in that they are all “interested in science.” That commonality, however, also serves as the grounds for their “differences”: Terry specializes in engineering, Jeff has an aptitude in biology, and Van is trained in sociology. When Van assesses the abilities of each man within their different chosen fields, Terry is “one of the best of our airmen,” while physician Jeff is merely “a good one, for his age.” Unlike Terry who is “rich enough to do as he pleased” and can therefore learn a variety of trades, Jeff acquiesces to parental pressure by not pursuing a career in either botany or poetry.²⁴¹ Recounting how each man joins the South American expedition, Van characterizes Jeff’s motivation as thin: “They needed a doctor, and that gave Jeff an excuse for dropping his just opening practice.”²⁴² From Van’s perspective, Jeff is not an agent: he either is goaded into his course of study or he needs an “excuse” to abandon his practice even in its earliest stages. These ties of narration can perhaps be explained in terms of the retrospective storytelling: deciding that Jeff secures a place in Herland society because he is a follower, Van filters the earliest plot events through that lens. Regardless of the possible rationale, it is nonetheless worth remarking that Van occludes Jeff from the narrative.

If it is strange that Van should start a story about paradise by describing the censorship he encounters there and should ignore the only character to acclimate successfully, it is perhaps more peculiar that he praises Terry, whose violence triggers

²⁴¹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (3-4)

²⁴² Ibid. (4)

both men's expulsion from paradise, in these terms: "We never could have done the thing at all without Terry."²⁴³ The motivation for this incongruous tribute can be potentially traced to an early acknowledgment that Van joins the South American expedition not for his expertise but for his social capital: "as for me, I got in through Terry's influence."²⁴⁴ The dynamic between the two men, therefore, may receive more narrative attention because of that patronage. Early in the text, Van does hint that the financier's ideas about women are "unpleasant"²⁴⁵ and, during the first encounter with the three young Herlanders, Van "did not like the look in his eyes—it was like a creature about to spring."²⁴⁶ Even in foreshadowing the eventual violence, though, Van cannot help but list Terry's merits and virtues. Referring to previous improprieties, Van explains that none of their college friends would trust him with their sisters, but still Terry is "a man's man, very much so, generous and brave and clever."²⁴⁷ These stylistic maneuvers indicate that Van has difficulty reconciling his knowledge of the later violence with his admiration and indebtedness to the man.²⁴⁸ We may guess why Van loses sight of Jeff—possessing no power in either country, Van may decide that he is not worth cultivating—but even that does not explain why Gilman also allows him to be so thoroughly eclipsed in the narrative by Terry.

²⁴³ Ibid. (4)

²⁴⁴ Van is acutely aware that he is not needed on the trip: "We three had a chance to join a big scientific expedition. *They needed* a doctor, and that gave Jeff an excuse for dropping his just opening practices; *they needed* Terry's experience, his machine and his money; and *as for me, I got in through Terry's influence.*" (my emphasis, 4)

²⁴⁵ Ibid. (11)

²⁴⁶ Ibid. (18)

²⁴⁷ Ibid. (11)

²⁴⁸ "I hated to admit to myself how much Terry had sunk in my esteem....At home we had measured him with other men, and, though we knew his failings, he was by no means an unusual type. We knew his virtues too, and they had always seemed more prominent than his faults. Measured among women—our women at home, I mean—he had always stood high." Ibid. (75)

Terry may merit more narrative attention for his ability to illuminate how power can operate both outside of and within Herland. During the initial expedition through South America, the men speculate about how they would navigate a radically different social organization such as an all-female society. Assuming that the country will resemble a harem, Terry opines that he will gain power by creating rivalries between the women: “I’ll get solid with them all—and play one bunch against another. I’ll get myself elected King in no time—whew! Solomon will have to take a back seat!”²⁴⁹ The boast outlines the parameters of the eventual poetic justice of Gilbert and Gubar’s analysis: Terry assumes that he will be able to manipulate the Herlanders, much as he does women in America, only to discover that those same methods will be used against him. The women, as previously indicated, use a variety of tactics to create rivalries among the three explorers.

We can note in addition, however, that competition among the men predates their arrival in Herland and thus cannot exclusively be associated with what the Herlanders perceive as, in Gilbert and Gubar’s suggestive phrasing, “secondary sexual characteristics.”²⁵⁰ Terry exposes how the power dynamic is not restricted to a male-female dyad inasmuch as he employs the same logic on the other two men during the expedition. Van’s point of pride, for example, is his scientific bent: “I always flattered myself I had a scientific imagination, which, incidentally, I considered the highest sort. One has a right to a certain amount of egotism if founded on fact—and kept to one’s self—I think.”²⁵¹ When Terry steers the conversation about how the men will navigate

²⁴⁹ Ibid. (11) Van humorously tries to use his social capital by asking for a position in this new, imagined political configuration, but Terry rebuffs him by suggesting that he would incite an insurrection.

²⁵⁰ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. *No Man’s Land, Vol. 2: Sexchanges*. (73)

²⁵¹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (27)

the matriarchal society, he exploits that quiet egotism: “‘Now then, my scientific friend, let us consider our case dispassionately.’ He meant me, but Jeff seemed most impressed.”²⁵² Terry “gets in solid with” Van and Jeff by flattering their professional expertise and “plays one” against the other by letting each assume that the compliment is addressed only to him.

The role of expertise and recognition becomes more nuanced as the novel progresses. Van may lack the Herlanders’ approval for his “secondary sexual characteristics,” but he believes he has their esteem because of his sociological expertise; however, his need to have his work be valued makes him less perceptive about their culture (ostensibly what his expertise should enable him to do). Thus I contend that Gilman suggests Van may be invested in professional pride at the expense of honing his professional skills: that allows the reader to step into that space. For example, when the men are allowed to give their lecture tour, which Van likens it not only to a traveling zoological exhibition but also to an auction for mating purposes, where “there was no rush of takers.”²⁵³ Rather than dwell on the rejection, Van describes the experience with bemusement, as if his professional training provides him with a critical lens through which to interpret the proceedings. Gilman indicates that his professional background grants him insight into the proceedings but whether Van can discern what the composition of each group signifies, however, is debatable. Perceiving that Terry fares poorly because he is surrounded by the smallest group of women, Van then determines that he must be the most popular because he commands the largest audience. He disparages the constituency of Jeff’s group for being “more sentimental—though that is

²⁵² Ibid. (27)

²⁵³ Ibid. (89)

not the word I want. The less practical perhaps; the girls who were artists of some sort, ethicists, teachers—that kind.”²⁵⁴ Thus it is possible that, although Van has more women congregating around him, he does not have the support of the most influential figures of society. We know that mothers are the most esteemed members of the society—Celis, for example, will be the most honored woman in Herland for her new form of dual-parent motherhood. And thus a smaller group of the “sentimental” types might prove a more powerful alliance in Herland than a larger group of the more “practical” sort that Van attracts. Although this would be impossible to show definitively, I want to suggest that Gilman encourages the reader to consider the possibility, and that she does so in order to critique Van’s observational skill as a sociologist. We know, for example, that Terry can discern what Van does not: “They only got up that ceremony to please us—please Jeff mostly. They’ve no real idea of being married.”²⁵⁵ His complaint is that the marriages will be sexless, but he is also able to discern that the Herlanders placate them in order to cultivate a relationship with Jeff.

I want to suggest that it is not incidental that a more careful study of the novel reveals the insufficiencies of Van’s sociological analysis and insights from other characters that could improve or complicate that analysis. As noted, Van is deprived of his notes and his narration is marked as unreliable, but Gilman also suggests, more to the point, that Van’s sociological method is imprecise at best. At the beginning of the novel, Van proclaims that he is a sociological expert and that “Terry was strong on facts—geography and meteorology and those; Jeff could beat him any time on biology, and I didn’t care what it was that they talked about, so long as it connected with human life,

²⁵⁴ Ibid. (87)

²⁵⁵ Ibid. (124)

somehow. There are few things that don't."²⁵⁶ Interested in "human life" generally, Van assumes that his prediction about what Herland is like will be similar to models of earlier societies:

"You're all off boys," I insisted. "If there is such a place—and there does seem some foundation for believing it—you'll find it's built on a sort of matriarchal principle—that's all...This is a condition known to have existed—here's just a survival."²⁵⁷

His hypothesis is perhaps the closest to the reality of Herland but his assumptions about female capabilities are narrow, as he readily admits: "And with all my airs of sociological superiority I was no nearer than any of them."²⁵⁸

One could argue that Van improves as a sociologist by discarding incorrect or outdated assumptions. But such a reading would not capture how central sociology is to Gilman's political theories and would overlook her interest in the perfectability of that expertise. In her bestselling work of nonfiction, *Women and Economics*, Gilman advances some very troubling eugenic ideas (which Peyser well outlines), but she also suggests that sociology is one of the primary methods of reforming society and denaturalizing concepts like monogamy:

Without the power of complete analysis, without knowledge of the sociological data essential to such analysis, we have sweepingly condemned as a whole what we could easily see was so allied with pain and loss. But, like all natural phenomena, the phenomena of sex may be studied, both the normal and the abnormal, the physiological and the pathological; and we are quite capable of understanding why we are in such evil case, and how we may attain more healthful conditions.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Ibid. (3-4)

²⁵⁷ Ibid. (9)

²⁵⁸ Ibid. (10)

²⁵⁹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Women and Economics*. (14)

For Gilman, reform is impossible without a robust sociology that aims at “complete analysis.” I want therefore to suggest that in making her first-person narrator a sociologist, Gilman encourages the reader to continue to question his account of the fantastical realm in order to suggest refinements for “the sociological data essential to such analysis.”

And it turns out that although Van’s initial prediction about the sociocultural arrangements of Herland are incorrect, he rarely tests his theories or challenges his assumptions. Indeed he appears more interested in evidence that reinforces his professional pride than in evidence that could improve his professional acumen. He relates what he learns about the historical and cultural development of the utopia from the Herlanders, for example, without questioning whether his own experiences match the account. Reciting lore about how the Herlanders rebuilt their civilization after a volcanic event isolated them from the wider world, Van describes how they made a concentrated effort to devote resources to adapting to the environment, building efficiencies, and taking “the greatest pains to develop two kinds of minds—the critic and inventor.”²⁶⁰ Van sees confirmation of this claim in the urban planning of the utopia: since Herland has natural boundaries that do not allow for territorial expansion, a portion of the population works as foresters or landscape architects to maximize the natural resources, turning every tree into a fruit- or nut-bearing variant of the species.²⁶¹ Yet despite the evidence

²⁶⁰ Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, *The YellowWall-paper and Selected Writings* (77)

²⁶¹ In his book that traces the logic of failures in utopian engineering, James C. Scott describes the problems of a state-organized agriculture (projects that are similar to the “petted forest” Gilman describes as the basis for Herlanders sustenance). He details the 4 reasons such projects failed: 1) administering nature by transforming or simplifying complex processes, 2) possessing an uncompromising belief in the powers of scientific methodology and analysis in meeting human needs, 3) an authoritarian state that can implement such schemes 4) a civil society that is unable to resist the state’s plans. He describes how a petted forest, such as the one that Gilman describes, has historical analogues—all of which failed precisely through the intervention into landscaping that was designed primarily for human-benefit. I mention this text because

of invention and reform available in the landscape design, Van's own treatment by the Herlanders suggests that he may overestimate the cultural power of these two fields. Van is a critic by professional training, but his notes are confiscated and he is encouraged to leave the country. Jeff, on the other hand, is actively pursued by the Herlanders, even though he is a "born worshipper" who can praise the Herland methods of discipline even when he is imprisoned by them. In revealing how Van's observations are not thorough, Gilman suggests that it is possible to question his understanding of events, his place in the society, and his understanding of the social structure.

Van seems largely unaware that he is not welcomed into the country, which then undermines his credibility in interpreting the novel's conclusion. Not only is it intimated that he problematically does not call Terry's assault a crime, but it is also suggested that his attitudes about children are unpleasant to Herlanders. Toward the end of the novel, Ellador explains that she is glad that she has not conceived a child because she would be unable to travel. She then suggests abstaining from any further sexual relations in order to prevent pregnancy and, when Van is uncomfortable with this solution, she counters: "Unless...if one is coming, you will leave me behind. You can come back, you know—and I shall have the child."²⁶² In response, Van is overcome with "that deep ancient chill of male jealousy of even his own progeny" and tells her that he would rather have her "on [her] own terms, than not to have [her]."²⁶³ Although the exchange between husband and wife goes largely unremarked, it seems as if Ellador has only really presented two

there is an excellent chapter on agricultural practices designed at the state-level that also speaks to some of the problems in Herland in terms of its organization. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*.

²⁶² Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (138)

²⁶³ Ibid. (138)

choices: leave with her or leave her temporarily. Van seems to understand implicitly the underlying suggestion that there is no third option of staying: this is evident in the way he frames the chapter—with a description of the men always intended to leave Herland, “but when it came to being turned out, dismissed, sent away for bad conduct, we none of us really liked it.”²⁶⁴ The claim is strange because, at that point, only Terry is explicitly exiled, while Jeff is allowed to stay. “We none of us” is therefore a strange formulation: the description allows us to reconsider Van’s status within the society and whether he chooses to leave. Moreover, if Ellador successfully convinces Van to leave despite not particularly desiring that outcome, it can change how we interpret the marriages and their significance in the novel.

Early in the novel, the men entertain fantasies of multiple love affairs but, as the plot progresses, they enter into monogamous arranged marriages, which leads the reader to question the rationale behind the pairings. Van does not investigate why they are matched with Ellador, Celis, and Alima; it is, however, implied that the first women who meet them are a natural choice for partners. That initial encounter does not seem to be happenstance, since the entire nation hears the sound of the airplane and watches it approach for miles. Enough time passes between the sighting and the plane landing, in fact, that “word flashed all over the country, and a council was held in every town and village.”²⁶⁵ Given that the citizenry participate in a public debate about how to handle the encounter, it seems more plausible that the women are chosen as ambassadors. The reader is granted limited insight into Herland political processes because the decision-making is conveyed in a truncated, telegraphic form: “From another country. Probably

²⁶⁴ Ibid. (132)

²⁶⁵ Ibid. (88)

men. Evidently highly civilized. Doubtless possessed of much valuable knowledge. May be dangerous. Catch them if possible; tame and train them if necessary.”²⁶⁶ Within the context of these instructions, we can even imagine that the youth, agility, and beauty of the three are meant to tempt the men into abandoning their aircraft, to trick a man like Terry into revealing his potential for sexual violence, and then to allow the women to escape the trap they set. That is, at least, how events do unfold. Further, the spouses’ role as foresters provides a credible reason for the meeting, and it permits the protective Herlanders to allow the potentially dangerous men to shadow their wives at work in a way that would endanger a nursery or a classroom. The solitary nature of forestry allows the couples relative autonomy and keeps the potential threat of violence in the periphery of the country.

If the wives’ work is a factor in the marriages, then there may be another more sinister reason for the pairings. Ellador, like most Herlanders, chooses her career path at a young age; when she was a child, she captured a rare moth on the verge of extinction and her teacher explained the significance of her discovery in the following terms:

“They are almost gone. We have been trying to exterminate them for centuries. If you had not caught this one, it might have laid eggs enough to raise worms enough to destroy thousands of our nut trees—thousands of bushels of nuts—and make years and years of trouble for us.”

Everybody congratulated me. The children all over the country were told to watch for that moth, if there were any more. I was shown the history of the creature, and an account of the damage it used to do and of how long and hard our foremothers had worked to save that tree for us. I grew a foot, it seemed to me, and determined then and there to be a forester.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Ibid. (88)

²⁶⁷ Ibid. (102)

There is a troubling undercurrent to her story, if we entertain the possibility that she has been paired with Van because of her particular forestry background. The Herland citizens are apprised of the history of men and the “damage” they “used to do” before the last were killed. The social elders continue to monitor the potential threat of a different kind of dangerous breeding—namely, that of non-parthenogenic reproductive couples. While the Herlanders are intrigued by the potential benefits of diversifying the gene pool, they also proceed cautiously, with a keen awareness of the potential for social unrest. If Terry is correct that the Herlanders welcome only Jeff into their society, then Ellador’s decision to visit America with Van may serve a different purpose. Van, not violent enough to be banished outright like Terry but also not as pliant as Jeff, may be another dangerous creature that needs to be rooted out of the closed ecosystem of Herland.

It bears noting that although they may accept Jeff into the society, the Herlanders never extend him full citizenship rights. Van introduces the concept when he imagines, early in the narrative, how an all-female society might be organized: as opposed to Terry’s harem, Van envisions how the men might “have a separate cult of their own, less socially developed than the women, and make them an annual visit—a sort of wedding call.”²⁶⁸ Van postulates that males will only be allowed to participate in the matriarchal society for mating purposes and otherwise will spend time in seclusion. The theory appears to be challenged when the explorers arrive on the island and find no evidence in written or pictorial form that men exist in the civilization. Van, nevertheless, extrapolates on his theory, arguing that: “they may have some peculiar division of labor we’ve never heard of....The men live in separate towns, or they may have subdued them—

²⁶⁸ Ibid. (9)

somehow—and keep them shut up.” Terry, ever aware of power asymmetry, protests that the theory is chilling in its resemblance to their own circumstances of being “subdued and shut up.”²⁶⁹ A few months later, when the men begin to know more of the language, they learn about the Herlanders’ various innovations in animal husbandry. The Herlanders describe how, in analyzing parentage in the natural world, they determined that males are not always crucial for social development and experimented with limiting and controlling the male population of insects and animals. The Herlanders, for example, domesticate cats to be silent—only capable of communicating the need to eat, to tend to their young, and to purr—and limit the contact of the male of the species: “The fathers are few compared to the mothers, just a few very fine ones in each town; they live quite happily in walled gardens and the houses of their friends. But they only have a mating season once a year.”²⁷⁰ The glimpse into Herland husbandry practices allows for the possibility that Jeff is only one of the “few fine ones” allowed to stay in Herland, once Terry is banished on threat of death and Van is encouraged to depart under the direction of his wife’s soft power.²⁷¹ In other words, Terry may be correct that the imprisonment techniques indicate that the Herlanders possess methods of isolating men as they do the cats and that Jeff is the only true candidate for inclusion in Herland society.

Unable to experience the utopia as utopic, Terry illuminates potential social ills within Herland, even if his constant social criticism is as unauthorized, in a sense, as it is authorized by the text. His pleasure in seeing Herlanders knit because he considers it a

²⁶⁹ Ibid. (31)

²⁷⁰ Ibid. (52)

²⁷¹ This is further supported by the fact that the marriages are arranged, described in these terms: “We thought—at least Terry did—that we could have our pick of them. They thought—very cautiously and farsightedly—of picking us, if it seemed wise.” [Ibid. (89)] and the direct threat that “if, by any accident, you did harm any one of us, you would have to face a million mothers.” [Ibid. (67)] The men are strictly controlled in Herland and must think of marriage in terms of procreation.

traditionally feminine art, his unwillingness to acknowledge the wisdom of older women, his sexual predation, and his other patriarchal predispositions are all undeniably problematic. But he also insists on unearthing the problems in the society, as he explains:

The whole thing's deuced unnatural—I'd say impossible if we weren't in it. And an unnatural condition's sure to have unnatural results. You'll find some awful characteristics—see if you don't! For instance—we don't know yet what they do with their criminals—their defectives—their aged. You notice we haven't seen any! There's got to be something!"²⁷²

His inability to see matriarchy as feasible is, of course, not valorized, but Gilman draws attention to the conditions of social exclusion through his exclamations. Ostracized and isolated himself, Terry is confident that the Herlanders have somehow similarly concealed social deviants and other marginalized figures. And the Herlanders' answer to his question troubles both Van and literary critics alike. The Herlanders explain that they have not had a "criminal" in six hundred years because they "have, of course, made it [their] first business to train out, to breed out, when possible, the lowest types."²⁷³ When a woman exhibits "bad qualities," she is encouraged to renounce biological motherhood if she still has "the power to appreciate social duty," but they will forcibly remove the child if she proceeds with the pregnancy despite objections. To which Van replies: "Then you separate mother and child!" I cried in cold horror, something of Terry's feeling creeping over me, that there must be something wrong among these many virtues."²⁷⁴ Thomas Peyser notes, as have other critics, that the eugenics program is disturbing in itself; he also observes that Gilman's implicit racism binds women to procreation more decidedly. Gilman uses Terry's naïve incredulity to destigmatize

²⁷² Ibid. (82)

²⁷³ Ibid. (83)

²⁷⁴ Ibid. (84)

nontraditional familial arrangements and to strategize how to handle social unrest in utopia, but she also uses his savviness in order to question the Herlander solutions of taking a child away from a woman who deviates from unspecified behavioral norms.

Even Van, an interloper with restricted access to the wider community, notes how the policing of norms can be uncomfortable to watch. Van is sensitive to how Herlanders treat one another and approves of how women “who had a real weakness or fault were treated with cheerful allowance, as a friendly group at whist would treat a poor player.”²⁷⁵ He delights in the fact that Terry is subtly corrected and patronized by his minder in this same way. In the midst of his amusement, though, Van notes how the warden expresses “genial laughter, not only with, but I often felt, at [Terry]—though impeccably polite.”²⁷⁶ The gentle cruelty perhaps affects Van because, by the conclusion of the novel, he apprehends how the same techniques have been used against him. It also seems that the society is not immune to internal dissent, as when Van describes how the spiritual needs of the community are met:

As for those little temples *everywhere*—some of the women were more skilled, more temperamentally inclined, in this direction, than others. These, whatever their work might be, gave certain hours to the Temple Service, which meant being there with all their love and wisdom and *trained thought*, to smooth out rough places for anyone who needed it. Sometimes it was a real grief, very rarely a quarrel, most often a perplexity; even in Herland the human soul had its hours of darkness.”²⁷⁷

Van suggests that interpersonal crises are anomalous, infrequent, and limited in duration.

Although he emphasizes the infrequency of despair in paradise, it seems strange that a country, hemmed in by natural boundaries, devotes its limited real estate to “little temples

²⁷⁵ Ibid. (102)

²⁷⁶ Ibid. (75)

²⁷⁷ Ibid. (my emphasis, 114)

everywhere.” The religious structures might be remnants from the historical period when the country faced extinction, but this seems unlikely, considering how willing the Herlanders are to convert buildings and adjust city planning to meet the needs of the citizenry. This is to say that, many women may have expertise in the “trained thought” of “Temple Service” and more Herlanders avail themselves of those services than Van can perceive. The prevalence of the temples, moreover, calls to mind Arlie Russell Hochschild’s insight about affective labor: “We commonly assume that institutions are called in when individual controls fail...But in looking at the matter this way, we may ignore the fact that individual failures of control often signal a prior institutional failure to shape feeling.”²⁷⁸ Herland thus may have need of trained thought because the citizens of the society feel discomfited by the policing of norms.

For all its wonders and advancements, further, Herland, topographically resembles the colonial mansion and its surrounds in “The Yellow Wall-paper.” In the story, the unnamed narrator goes mad under the pressures of isolation, surveillance, and compulsory leisure while confined to a remodeled nursery on the top floor of a country house; chafing at his own conditions of captivity, Terry derisively calls Herland “an everlasting parlor and nursery.”²⁷⁹ The men, moreover, share a room at the top of a high tower, and Van learns that sharing living quarters is a practice reserved for children, which indicates that the prison is a kind of nursery.²⁸⁰ The isolation of the vacation home

²⁷⁸ Arlie Russell Hochschild. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. (49)

²⁷⁹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (99) To which, Van replies, “And workshop....And school, and office, and laboratory, and studio, and theater, and—home.” (99)

²⁸⁰ Van describes the experience of capture as infantilizing: “Instantly each of us was seized by five women, each holding arm or leg or head; we were lifted like children, straddling helpless children, and borne onward, wriggling indeed, but most ineffectually.” Ibid. (25) Terry points out how the Herlanders confiscate their things: “We have been stripped and washed and put to bed like so many yearling babies...” Ibid. (27)

in “The Yellow Wall-paper,” “quite alone, away from the road, miles from the village” corresponds to Herland’s seclusion, its distance even from the nearest South American villages. The mansion has a number of “hedges and walls and gates that lock,” which are echoed by the natural methods of enclosure in Herland. Much like the three explorers, who marvel at the Herlanders’ ability to train a forest into a garden of fruit-or-nut-bearing flora, the narrator of the story exclaims that her home has “a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.”²⁸¹ There is a private wharf on the estate, just as there is a river that drains to a larger water source below the cliffs of Herland. From the unnamed narrator’s vantage, she can see the individual homes for servants, reminiscent of the structures dotting the landscape of Herland. Van even makes the comparison explicit by commenting that “the untroubled peace, the unmeasured plenty, the steady health, the large good will and smooth management which ordered everything, left nothing to overcome. It was like a pleasant family in an old established perfectly run place.”²⁸² Both Herland and the country home seem to offer a space for “steady health” and “untroubled peace,” elements essential for the rest cure. With the correspondences between the settings of the two fictional spaces before us, we can see that Terry is linked to the female protagonist in “The Yellow Wall-paper” by more than their shared dissatisfaction with confinement.

For Gilbert and Gubar, the stultifying incarceration of “The Yellow Wallpaper” is eased by extending the privacy of the home to the boundaries of a country, making Herland representative of the freedom to which the narrator aspires:

²⁸¹ Ibid. (167)

²⁸² Ibid. (100)

...the narrator glimpses through her window a horde of women moving freely through a garden where everything is green rather than yellow. Journeying toward “mysterious deep-shaded arbors,...riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees,” where can these women be fleeing if not towards the queens’ gardens of Herland?²⁸³

Such a reading is compelling, but it seems to gloss over how the technologies of psychological control are reproduced in Herland. Occupying a room at the top of a tower in Herland, under heavy guard for nine months, affords the same view of an inaccessible freedom. Terry, unable to appreciate the advantages of Herland, is treated with condescension by Van and Jeff: “We laid most of it to his nerves. He certainly was irritable.”²⁸⁴ Their assessment evokes the infantilization experienced by the female narrator of “The Yellow Wall-paper.” More to the point, it indicates a similar inability to forecast how psychologically damaging the experience of imprisonment will be. If the narrator hallucinates the disturbing image of bulbous yellow eyes staring at her from the walls, then Terry becomes equally paranoid about how “one or another pair of eyes is on us every minute except at night.”²⁸⁵ Like the narrator, Terry becomes suicidal before he becomes violent: “When Terry burst forth to tramp the streets at night he always found a ‘Colonel’ here or there, and when, on an occasion of fierce though temporary despair, he had plunged to the cliff edge with some vague view to escape, he found several of them close by.”²⁸⁶ The Herlanders explain that they have no punishments for social deviation, only “preventative measures, and cures; sometimes we have to ‘send the patient to bed,’ as it were; but that’s not a punishment—it’s only part of the treatment.”²⁸⁷ It seems that

²⁸³ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. *No Man’s Land Vol. 2: Sexchanges*. (77)

²⁸⁴ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The Yellow Wall-paper and Selected Writings*. (78)

²⁸⁵ Ibid. (36)

²⁸⁶ Ibid. (99)

²⁸⁷ Ibid. (112)

Herland does not offer a respite from the claustrophobia of “The Yellow Wall-paper” but a reiteration of it, at least for some of its inhabitants.

Critics have long held that Gilman did not want readers of “The Yellow Wall-paper” to identify too closely with fiction as such: Ann Lane, quoting Gilman herself, explains that her writing “‘leads us back to reality,’ not away from it,”²⁸⁸ while Barbara Hochman describes how Gilman made the distinction “between reading that might become a substitute for the ‘real’ world and reading that might lead one to confront it.”²⁸⁹ I contend that the same principle holds true for *Herland*, and is most visible in the scenes in which Terry attempts to escape. Although Terry may be an object of scorn because he cannot adapt to matriarchal life, Gilman seems not to approve wholeheartedly of the other men’s strategies of appeasement, which Van explains in these terms: “If we are good boys and learn our lessons well...if we are quiet and respectful and polite and they are not afraid of us—then perhaps they will let us out.” Terry balks at the phrase “*Let* out—like children kept after school. I want to Get Out, and I am going to.”²⁹⁰ His intentions for the escape may not be admirable—he wants to fight or have sex—but his wanting to “Get Out” is understandable against the context of the months of imprisonment. Van indicates as much when he describes how all three men agree to follow Terry’s escape plan, despite the fact that “it seemed a crazy risk to take.”²⁹¹ Once they descend from their tower on a rope of bed linens, “then there were three quick pulls, and Jeff and I, not without a joyous sense of recovered freedom, successfully followed our leader.”²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Ann Lane. “The Fictional World of Charlotte Perkins Gilman.” *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader*. (51)

²⁸⁹ Barbara Hochman. “The Reading Habit and ‘The Yellow Wallpaper.’” *American Literature* (94)

²⁹⁰ Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland, The YellowWall-paper and Selected Writings* (33)

²⁹¹ *Ibid.* (37)

²⁹² *Ibid.* (38)

Despite claims that imprisonment in Herland is not onerous, Van is thrilled to have more autonomy and freedom: the affective intensities of escape, moreover, are not oriented towards a particular vision, but emerge out of a desire to be free of the current state order. I want to suggest that the escape attempt has a privileged status in the novel because it reveals something like what Paolo Virno describes as “exodus” in its ability to establish relationships of solidarity in “the *safeguarding* of the forms of life and communitarian relations experienced en route.”²⁹³

One of the striking aspects of *Herland* is its insistence that moving from a patriarchal mindset, with its attendant emphasis on competition and its roots in structural inequality, to a different social composition will require an awareness of the perspectives of marginalization in order to enact longer-term reform. Having three characters react to the structural dynamics in Herland affords not only opportunities for gender reversal but also an avenue to explore how cultural changes will negatively or positively affect each different individuals. And we can speculate that Gilman grants Terry, the exile, more space in the narrative than Jeff, who is successfully integrated into the society, because working towards systemic reform needs to be seen as a process that requires continual engagement—sustained and incisive attention to environments and hierarchies and to the strategies and forms of labor that produce them.

From this point of view, *Herland* looks neither straightforwardly didactic nor unwittingly ideologically conflicted. Rather, it suggests an author who deliberately

²⁹³ Paolo Virno. *Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus*. (204) The scene is not a perfect fit to the theory because Terry is associated with the power of patriarchy and also of the capitalist class, as a wealthy financier. An escape with Terry is an agreement to be subsumed to his preference of state organization. The men, moreover, do attempt to leave the state, as opposed to Virno’s description of exiting factory work for communitarian farm labor. Nevertheless, the escape attempt is clearly marked as a form of political action that is not state-oriented and thus creates bonds of affiliation among the men.

balances the drive for full-scale systemic change with an understanding that one might desire to escape from someone else's utopia, and who joins this understanding to a vision that recuperates occluded forms of socially reproductive labor and develops a method for perceiving how such work is registered in the material world. As we will see in the next chapter, Virginia Woolf is also willing to imagine structural reform, despite being prevented from full participation in the administration of society because of her gender. Where the rest cure empowered Gilman to reimagine the aesthetics of entire networks of systems, a prolonged convalescence allowed Woolf to rethink the relationship between evaluators and workers. Further, Woolf, like Gilman, attempts to create a reading practice that supplements institutional reform while retaining a commitment to representing the experience of marginalization. In privileging the experience of work that is not publicly acknowledged, both authors create methods of characterization that depart in certain ways from traditional narrative structures. Gilman creates character composites who may not seem fully coherent because simultaneously privileged by and victims of gender-based hierarchy, while in Woolf's *Night and Day*, characters can become opaque because of the insufficiencies of managerial observation and objectives.

Chapter Three: Managing Narration in Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*

In "The Bloomsbury Fraction," Raymond Williams explores how disenchantment, experienced by a small network of actors, translates into lingering political and social aftereffects in the next generation. Disdainful of the institutional hypocrisies of the British Empire and its military, the members of the Bloomsbury Group gifted their successors with the ethos of "civilized individualism," in which "public interventions" are made primarily to protect the individual autonomy and taste of "all the best people."²⁹⁴ Williams credits their experiments in psychology and literature, especially Virginia Woolf's use of interior monologue, with making the personal ethos appealing to a larger, cosmopolitan audience. For Williams, though, the negative cultural inheritance of civilized individualism is two-fold: it encourages political subjects to protect individual sovereignty at the expense of solidarity and can be "a summary phrase for a process of conspicuous and privileged consumption."²⁹⁵ Concern that political quietism can be traced to the twin investments in interiority and consumption resonates in scholarship critical of Woolf and the "Bloomsberries" more generally. Dimitri Mirsky, a contemporary, dismisses them as "theoreticians of the passive, dividend drawing and consuming section of the bourgeoisie" and, as such, "extremely intrigued by their own minutest inner experiences."²⁹⁶ The literary historian Hugh Kenner quips that "Bloomsbury was a breeding-place for such passive heroes"²⁹⁷ as the connoisseur and its "investing value wholly in states of mind" was problematic because "it didn't require you

²⁹⁴ Raymond Williams. "The Bloomsbury Fraction." *Culture and Materialism*. (167)

²⁹⁵ Ibid. (166)

²⁹⁶ Dimitri Mirsky, ed. Majumdar and McLaurin. *Virginia Woolf: A Critical Heritage* Routledge (348)

²⁹⁷ Hugh Kenner. *A Sinking Island: The Modern English Writers* (162)

to *do* anything whatever. Your friends, your vases: your states of mind amid those constituted heaven.”²⁹⁸

If Williams sees Woolfian stream of consciousness as anticipating post-1945 consumerism, Franco Moretti, in company with other critics contends that it responds to mechanisms already in place during the turn-of-the-century transition from a production-centered to a consumption-centered model of the economy. Interior monologue then is not only a transcription of previously undisclosed mental processes, for Moretti, but also a palliative for modern life, helping the reader process the bombardment of stimuli and desires that comes with an ever-changing retail terrain.²⁹⁹ The literary technique can be a passive practice because the reader need not subordinate sensory data into narrative choices and can indulge in fantasies of never-ending potentiality.³⁰⁰ A fascination with sensory experience at the expense of action is also at the heart of Georg Lukács’s polemic “Narrate or Describe.” By tethering individuality to observation rather than action, “descriptive” authors suggest that life is “a constant, even-tenored stream” punctured “by ‘sudden’ catastrophes,” which are inexplicable rather than the result of class conflict.³⁰¹ Lukács asserts that “descriptive” authors, like certain mid-nineteenth century realists and

²⁹⁸ Hugh Kenner. *A Sinking Island: The Modern English Writers*. (162)

²⁹⁹ Moretti’s complicated argument in *Modern Epic* resists excerpting. Essentially, he notes the European “cities of truly epic dimensions” were flooded with products from all over the globe; however, “such unprecedented abundance subjects the ‘metropolitan type’ to a ‘nervous stimulation’ that threatens his wellbeing, and even his mental health.” (124) In order to mitigate these stressors, “a different style is required, in order to find one’s ways in the city of words; a weaker grammar than that of consciousness; an edgy, discontinuous syntax: a cubism of language, as it were. And the stream of consciousness offers precisely that: simple, fragmented sentences, where the subject withdraws to make room for the invasion of things.” (135)

³⁰⁰ “With the appearance of the stream of consciousness, contact between the two worlds [of possibility and of action] begins to fail; and the possible leads an independent life, alien and indeed hostile to any form of realization. Because realization is always also renunciation: by confirming one possibility, it excludes all others. And so, instead of turning into action, the stream of consciousness finds itself *competing* with it and growing at its expense.” (145-6)

³⁰¹ Georg Lukács. “Narrate or Describe.” *Writer and Critic*. (122)

their modernist successors, can hold this position because they are specialists, unaffiliated with other economic spheres.³⁰² Where Lukács sees a continuity of literary tradition, Saikat Majumdar interprets interior monologue as a “radical disruption” of the descriptive mode of what he calls “bureaucratic realism.”³⁰³ He contends that modernists observe but do not catalogue details in mimicry of bureaucratic tasks. Instead, modernists try to transcend the economic plane by “invest[ing] fragments of this ordinary life with the libidinal energy of the banal haunted by the unfulfilled promise of transcendence.”³⁰⁴ These theories, though positioned differently, rely on a shared narrative: passivity is associated with interiority, once observation is decoupled from the needs of administration or production.

These critical assertions, at once tantalizing and incomplete, provoke further questions that I will consider in this chapter. How does the Bloomsbury Group’s mistrust of institutional authority manifest as a continued investment in reform? If interior monologue responds to a transformation of the economy under which Europeans came to spend less time at work and more time at leisure, then how do the residual demands of production complicate the passive experience of consumption? If Lukács insists that an analysis of literature must include the author’s biography and class positioning, then why does he not acknowledge systemic obstacles to a writer’s development as an economic actor? Lukács contends that writers like Flaubert and Zola, as well as their modernist inheritors, absent themselves from economic and political participation, but he does not

³⁰² Lukács contrasts Balzac, Stendhal, Dickens, and Tolstoy, who participated in social struggles and “in the consolidation of bourgeois society after its crises” with Flaubert and Zola, who were “‘specialists’ in the sense of the capitalist division of labor.” (118) For the latter set of writers, once “the book had become merchandise, the writer, a salesman of this merchandise,” then “the only solution to the tragic contradiction in their situation was to stand aloof as observers and critics of capitalist society.” (119)

³⁰³ Majumdar, Saikat, *Prose of the World: Modernism and the Banality of Empire* (10)

³⁰⁴ Ibid. (12)

explore the specific contours of those qualitatively different retreats from public life. Denied a threshold of agency in political and administrative spheres because of her sex, Woolf could not supplement her writing with the direct war work, land management, or financial speculation that Lukács admires in the authors who “narrate” like Stendhal, Tolstoy, and Balzac. Lukács thus does not acknowledge that women were excluded from certain spheres of the economy, making their passivity structural. How can female authors, living under that form of historical exclusion, illuminate blind spots in economic theories by recuperating social reproduction and other invisible labors? Can the stream of consciousness technique transcend utilitarianism, as Majumdar argues,³⁰⁵ if there is administrative utility in studying the mind? And finally, the question to which these others in a sense add up: can we trace another genealogy for the rise of stream of consciousness, one that emerges from a form of observation associated with administrative and perhaps even political sources?

Particularly in her second and least critically examined novel, *Night and Day*, Woolf offers some productive purchase on these questions. If Woolf was charged with political quietism later in her career, then she was essentially accused of political silence in *Night and Day*. And perhaps not surprisingly: although composed during World War I and published shortly after Armistice Day, the novel lacks representation of the international conflict at the levels of both style and content. *Night and Day* is built

³⁰⁵ “The evaluative and generic implications of the term ‘prosaic’ have coexisted simultaneously in literary history. In the context of Woolf’s polemic, however, the evaluative meaning of the term comes to the surface and coincides with the image of bureaucratic labor. Such labor provides socially and economically valuable knowledge but can only be a banalizing model for the art of narrative fiction—‘the necessary drudgery of the novelist’. In the realm of the state and the economy, the methods and institutions of bureaucracy reinforce a nontranscendental organization of the everyday, and, in fact, the affinities between the bureaucratic systematization of factual information and the banality of realist fiction observed here by Woolf go considerably beyond the metaphor.” Ibid. (10)

around a straightforward marriage plot in which Katharine Hilbery forgoes a more conventional match with William Rodney, a government clerk who shares her same upper middle-class background, for Ralph Denham, an impoverished law clerk. *Night and Day* is indeed unique in Woolf's oeuvre for its traditionalism; but may also for this very reason illuminate her experiments with stream of consciousness in the novels that followed.

By focusing on Woolf's turn away from realism, I draw on Franco Moretti's more general claim that interior monologue emerges because of a "negative force: not the desire for novelty, but the collapse of an old constraint."³⁰⁶ Realism ceased to have explanatory power, according to Moretti in *Modern Epic*, because representing a unified self became unsustainable given the encroachment and disruption of new consumer tactics.³⁰⁷ He further argues that "[a]nthropocentrism disintegrates because the notion of a unitary individual—upon which it was premised—in turn collapses. But the expression 'in the twentieth century', here, may be deceptive. For if it is quite true that the process *is completed* in the twentieth century, it nevertheless begins much earlier."³⁰⁸ We can readily grant that the stream of consciousness emerges as a literary style once the notion of a coherent identity is fractured by social transformations begun in the late nineteenth century and culminating in the twentieth. However, Moretti primarily focuses on how strategies to lure European urbanites to shop and consume relied on the promise of never-

³⁰⁶ Franco Moretti. *Modern Epic*. (191)

³⁰⁷ Moretti's argument in *Modern Epic* explicitly highlights how the flood of global commodities and the intensification of advertising, in particular, encourages the reader to indulge in different fantasies of selfhood. Moretti then specifically contends that the stream of consciousness can help individuals manage the otherwise overwhelming sensory experience of intensified consumption: "In fact, the light-hearted nature of the stream of consciousness, its fantasizing possibilism, is precisely what puts Bloom at ease in the world of commodities, because it allows him to pick up hundreds and hundreds of stimuli, and play freely with them." (140)

³⁰⁸ Ibid. (192)

ending potentiality and thus encouraged individuals to conceive of identity as more fluid.³⁰⁹ I want to explore how changes in administration that began during the late nineteenth century and reached a high point in the beginning of the twentieth century could offer a different source for fantasies of selfhood that are perhaps more plastic, but not unfettered.

The transformations of administration during the war included a broadening of that sector, a crisis of confidence in its methodology, and a burgeoning interest in new strategies of assessing worker productivity through scientific management techniques. I do not want to claim that Woolf intervened in these cultural currents because she wanted to influence rates of factory production directly or to build systemic efficiencies. I simply want to suggest that, Woolf expands the use-value of character to accommodate the needs of a growing audience of professionals and administrators, and in so doing uses the traditional third-person narrator to assess the work—in terms of both physical movements *and* mental attention—of characters. This narrative technique implies an attempt to determine a character's mental focus from without rather than from within—but in developing it, as we will see, Woolf encounters the limitations of such observation. I further argue that the pleasure afforded by Woolf's investigations into consciousness, both in *Night and Day* and in her more successful novels, coincide with the objectives of scientific management techniques that require managers to sustain attention on an “ordinary” worker completing a sequence of tasks as they happen.

³⁰⁹ In the *Way of the World*, Moretti considers a different source for the changes to the representation of identity: “At the start of the twentieth century, as though obeying some secret signal, Conrad and Mann, Musil and Rilke, Kafka and Joyce, all set about writing stories of ‘formation’ [*Bildung*—in which the *Bildung* does not occur: in which objective culture, congealed in conventions and institutions, no longer helps to construct individual subjects, but wounds and disintegrates them.” Franco Moretti. *Way of the World*. (195) Although he describes institutional pressures, he does not capture administrative change, which is slightly different.

By foregrounding wartime administration, I subtly amend Raymond Williams's account of the Bloomsbury Group and its relationship to the expansion of bureaucracy. As the particular contours of his analysis are important to my argument, I will summarize it at some length. He describes how the members of Bloomsbury, many of whom were related to those in the upper ranks of colonial administration, met at an elite university in the throes of education reform that had much to do with administrative needs and strategies.³¹⁰ Thanks to the skepticism nurtured at Cambridge, the group became critical of administrative bodies for perpetuating institutional inequalities and a general climate of insincerity. Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina supports the narrative of what she calls "a generational evolution": "while their ancestral – and in some cases, immediate – families proudly served the empire, by the time the Bloomsbury set reached adulthood they had begun to reject most of what it stood for."³¹¹ Ian Baucom, on the other hand, holds that the "structure of feeling in which many English women and men simultaneously avow and disavow the British Empire" was neither new nor particularly atypical for the time.³¹² In any case, Williams argues that one outgrowth of their mistrust of systems was that the

³¹⁰ Raymond Williams. "The Bloomsbury Fraction." *Culture and Materialism*: "The old universities were reformed and made more serious. The administrative services were both developed and reformed, by the new needs of imperial and state administration, and by the competitive examinations which interlocked with the reformed universities." (159) He does suggest that this process began in the mid-nineteenth century, is part of a general process of professionalization, and that, even by the Bloomsbury period the reforms "promoted many significant and in a sense autonomous continuities, within the old universities." (161) However, he also explains that the professional sector becomes newly engaged during the formation of the Bloomsbury Group: "it was from this sector, and especially from its second and third generations, that novel definitions and new groups emerged; and specifically, in its full sense, Bloomsbury." (160) Finally, he indicates that the influence of GE Moore at Cambridge focalized their "sustained emphasis on candor...and clarity: the candid avowal, or any other kind of statement, must expect to be met with the question: 'what precisely do you mean by that?'" (152) Moreover, he explains that "these shared values and habits are then immediately relevant to the internal formation of the group and to some of its external effects." (153) By this he means, the rejection of cant and hypocrisy in the major institutions: "Bloomsbury's attitudes to 'systems' at least were among their most evident common, and principled, characteristics." (164)

³¹¹ Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina. "Bloomsbury and Empire." *Cambridge Guide to Bloomsbury*. (48)

³¹² Ian Baucom. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*. (18)

Bloomsberries refused to frame their own dynamic in systematic ways, preferring instead to present themselves merely as friends with disparate pursuits and goals. Despite their resistance to identifying a common platform, the members indirectly created one by prioritizing the personal over the political, style over collective action. Thus, according to Williams, the ethos of civilized individualism relegates political and economic action to the role of protecting individual taste and autonomy.

Consumer and citizen: these are the two subject identities that Williams claims have been shaped by the small group of friends who met at Cambridge. The cultural legacy of the Bloomsbury group, moreover, has proven to be a lasting one:

The final nature of Bloomsbury as a group is that it was indeed, and differentially, a group of and for the notion of free individuals. Any general position, distinct from this special assumption, would then have disrupted it, yet a whole series of specialized positions was at the same time necessary, for the free individuals to be civilized. And the irony is that both the special assumption, and the range of specialized positions, have become naturalized—though now more evidently incoherent—in all later phases of English culture.³¹³

The cultural inheritance of the Bloomsbury group is essentially autonomous and individualized political action without access to a larger principle or platform. Curiously, in diagnosing the problems of atomized consumers and political actors, Williams enlists the language of specialization without explicitly noting its administrative and managerial connotations.³¹⁴ In other words, while it is inarguable that the Group directly influenced civic participation and consumption patterns, his analysis also invites further exploration of how and why its cultural influence reflects key aspects of certain administrative practices.

³¹³ Raymond Williams. "The Bloomsbury Fraction." *Culture and Materialism*. (169)

³¹⁴ Ibid. (169) While Raymond Williams is interested in the economic implications of the cultural legacy, he does not analyze their effect on the sphere of production.

Where Williams focuses on its initial formation and then its legacy, I will isolate a period early in the Bloomsbury Group's development when members were physically divided and when direct criticism of state administration was difficult to sustain. During the war, Virginia Woolf felt disconnected from her circle of friends: in March of 1916, she writes to Katherine Cox how "Bloomsbury is vanished like the morning mist"³¹⁵ and then three months later that "Bloomsbury is pretty well exploded."³¹⁶ She intimates in a question posed to Molly McCarthy that the war is a cause: "Do you hear that Clive is settled as a farm laborer at Garsington? The war at anyrate [sic] has done some funny things among our friends."³¹⁷ Woolf refers to her brother-in-law Clive Bell, whose pacifist pamphlet *Peace at Once* posited that the enemy was not the Germans but the national class system; under wartime censorship standards, the pamphlet was publically destroyed by the Lord Mayor of London and Bell was briefly jailed. That Bell, whose family wealth came from the coal industry, worked as a laborer on a farm was indeed a "funny" circumstance of the war.³¹⁸ The war altered the lives of her other friends as well: Duncan Grant and David Garnett also evaded military service through agricultural work, Cox cared for refugees in Corsica, John Maynard Keynes served in the Treasury Department, Bertrand Russell was sent to Brixton Prison for his opposition to the war, and Leonard Woolf tried to inject socialist theories into his many projects, including the monthly review *War and Peace*.

The Bloomsbury Group, therefore, held a plurality of viewpoints on the war,

³¹⁵ 746: Letter to Katherine Cox (3/19/16)

³¹⁶ 770: Letter to Katherine Cox (6/25/16)

³¹⁷ 782: Letter to Molly MacCarthy (8/26/16)

³¹⁸ Garsington Manor served as alternative service refuge for many aristocrat conscientious objectors during the war; by some accounts, the artist/conscientious objector lacked a dedicated work ethic and the farm suffered financially.

expressed through actions, efforts, organizing, administrating, labor, and inaction. Direct criticism of the state, moreover, resulted in alternative service requirements or more serious consequences that could have a chilling effect. In a letter to Vanessa Bell in 1916, Woolf offers a glimpse of how pervasive the climate of fear could be: “London seems miles away except for these damned newspapers—Sanger has awful stories about conscientious objectors shipped to France and there shot.”³¹⁹ I want to suggest that the members of the Bloomsbury Group were still connected, but more loosely affiliated than in their earliest youth, by virtue of their differing stances on war work. While they did not share a direct political platform, they were galvanized by the war into reforming the state either from within or outside the system. Indeed, Christine Froula goes so far as to contend that the group did share a political platform, one that was argued in different sectors, for a prewar optimism in a postwar reality and “for a civilization that had never existed (hence could not be ‘saved’).”³²⁰

Williams never details what administrative reform theories were advanced at Cambridge, nor does he provide a comprehensive intellectual history of the Bloomsbury group. And without a narrative of the intervening years, when members like John Maynard Keynes and Leonard Woolf directly participated in administration and others abstained, he seems to founder in contradiction. He argues that the founding of the group is unintelligible outside the context of administration reform but also suggests that their legacy is almost entirely unconcerned with it; he claims that skepticism of institutions eventually manifested as political refusal, but he does not include an account of how Bloomsbury’s administrative theories changed, especially around the notions of

³¹⁹ 754: Letter to Vanessa Bell (4/22/16)

³²⁰ Christine Froula. *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde*. (3)

individuality and action. In my view, however, there is an interesting resonance between William's characterization of the Bloomsbury group, who "appealed to the supreme value of the civilized *individual*, whose pluralization, as more and more civilized individuals, was itself the only acceptable social direction," ³²¹ and Frederick Taylor's ideas for maximizing corporate prosperity by cultivating the individual worker. One of the tenets of Taylor's administrative philosophy is that "maximum prosperity" is defined not in terms of dividends for the owner of a business but in terms of the "development of every branch of the business to its highest state of excellence, so that the prosperity may be permanent." A related tenet is that the "maximum prosperity for each employee" is likewise determined not by wages, but by "the development of each man to his state of maximum efficiency, so that he may be able to do, generally speaking, the highest grade of work for which his natural abilities fit him."³²² This administrative theory suggests that long-term collective prosperity could be achieved through the improvement of individual departments, which would be best improved by cultivating individual abilities—a stance that is evocative of the Bloomsbury position as Williams construes it.

In any case, Williams does usefully highlight the point that the Bloomsbury group, and Woolf in particular, may have been more influenced by management theories than has been widely acknowledged. These concepts certainly had some purchase in modernist literary thought, as evidenced in Rebecca West's introduction to the Imagist poetry movement (1913): "Just as Taylor and Gilbreth want to introduce scientific management into industry so the *imagistes* want to discover the most puissant way of

³²¹ Raymond Williams. "The Bloomsbury Fraction." (original emphasis, 165)

³²² Frederick Taylor. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. (15)

whirling the scattered star dust of words into a new star of passion.”³²³ Although there is a sly humor in aligning timekeeping managerial methods with wrangling the “star dust of words,” West is not being purely satirical. Louis Menand argues that West attempts to position the Imagistes as a literary response to professional associations, a response that would have poets similarly “engaged on a problem that was not personal—how the writer might best express himself—but institutional—how literature might be made more effective.”³²⁴ Especially in her declaration that “there has arisen a little band who desire the poet to be as disciplined and efficient at his job as the stevedore,” West illustrates how modernists could frame their work as a profession, even as she attests to a widespread cultural knowledge of scientific management.

Two features of scientific management may be especially germane to Woolf and *Night and Day*: first, an emphasis on studying ordinary people completing ordinary tasks and, second, an investment in processes as they unfold. The cornerstone of Frederick Taylor’s *Principles of Scientific Management* is that a manager needs to observe a single worker with a stopwatch over the course of a few shifts in order to make production more effective for the entire department. In other words, by studying and refining that man’s motions, the manager can build in efficiencies throughout the process. Although the observed subject has the potential to transform an entire department, the choice of candidate is inconsequential to Taylor: “The selection of the man, then, does not involve finding some extraordinary individual, but merely picking out from among very ordinary men the few who are especially suited to this type of work.” Rather than discovering the most competent or quickest workers, Taylor claims that a manager need only find an

³²³ Rebecca West. “Imagisme.” *The New Freewoman*. (86)

³²⁴ Louis Menand. *Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and His Context*. (121-22)

average man in order to create systemic efficiencies. Foregrounding the ordinary is a key facet of scientific management and extends even to the act of managerial observation. Frank Gilbreth, a student and early adopter of scientific management, champions the system by arguing that “the method of inspection under traditional management is often wasteful, because the inspection is usually done after the material is fabricated. Under Scientific Management the inspection proceeds as does the work itself.”³²⁵

How much more compelling would it be to study an average person engaged in a task as the process unfolds, if there were a literary style that makes the experience of observation pleasurable? Woolf, one of the great appreciators of the commonplace, makes a compelling argument for cultivating such a habit of attention. Contrasting the Georgian investigations into psychology to Edwardian materialism, Woolf argues that the more interesting project is to set the locus of narrative observation in “an ordinary mind on an ordinary day” because “the mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with a sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms.”³²⁶ Thus, studying the ordinary can potentially be a transcendent experience, according to Woolf. To be sure, examining an ordinary mind in the sense Woolf seems to mean here is a vastly different enterprise than studying worker behavior. And yet, one of the most canonical readings of *To the Lighthouse* is Erich Auerbach’s chapter-long analysis of the brief passage in which Mrs. Ramsay alters a brown stocking: “what realistic depth is achieved in every individual occurrence, for example the measuring of the stocking! Aspects of the occurrence come to the fore, and links to other occurrences, which, before this time, had hardly been sensed, which had

³²⁵ Frederick Taylor. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. (43)

³²⁶ Virginia Woolf. “Modern Fiction.” *Critical Essays*. (45)

never been clearly seen and attended to, and yet they are determining factors in our real lives.”³²⁷ The darning of a stocking is somewhat incidental to Auerbach’s argument about “multipersonal representation of consciousness” and yet that arbitrary quality, in effect, underscores the point. The act of observing a character, engaged in a mundane task, is not itself a mundane act. Instead, according to Auerbach, “what happens in that moment—be it outer or inner processes” can offer endless insights about the specific life of a character and even “the elementary things which men in general have in common.”³²⁸

Woolf differs from Taylor in countless ways, the least of which is her capacity for sympathy and fellow-feeling for the ordinary minds that she studies.³²⁹ But part of my argument is that she introduces an element of managerial oversight in order to highlight some of the limitations. In my view, the embedded critique of observation during work in *Night and Day* has a personal dimension, inasmuch as Woolf was intensely monitored by her husband and nursing staff during the composition of the novel. But in addition, the inadequacies of scientific management were already culturally available: as Kevin Whitson notes, to take one example, the British trade magazine *The Engineer* issued an editorial that delineated how the method is “not sportsmanlike” because it deprives workers of mental engagement.³³⁰ Whitson also notes that Edward Carbury of the *Sociological Review* worried that the mechanistic techniques were so inhuman that they

³²⁷ Erich Auerbach. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. (552)

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ While Woolf’s private correspondence or diaries can present an unflattering picture of the common man, Taylor’s public writings are far more pointed and cruel. Taylor, for example, defends his brusque handling of a worker (calling him stupid, for example) in this way: “This seems to be rather rough talk. And indeed it would be if applied to an educated mechanic, or even an intelligent laborer. With a man of the mentally sluggish type of Schmidt it is appropriate and not unkind...”

³³⁰ Kevin Whitson. “The Reception of Scientific Management by British Engineers, 1890-1914.” *Business History Review*. (208)

might cause “social revolt.”³³¹ These criticisms were so prevalent that Gilbreth’s *Primer of Scientific Management* includes a series of responses to questions about worker welfare, such as: “Does not the forcing of the workmen to use the specified motions of the System only, from the time they arrive in the morning until they leave at night, take away their liberty and enforce slavery conditions on the workers?”³³²; “Does not the monotony of the highly specialized subdivision of work cause the men to become insane?”³³³; or “Does it not make machines out of men?”³³⁴ Whitson notes that these concerns were laid aside during the war and that by 1916, when Woolf began writing *Night and Day*, the same magazines were recommending Taylorism as “a way to guarantee the intelligent workman the gains from increased output.”³³⁵

The evolution of Woolf’s stylistic interests does coincide with the development of new managerial developments. My argument is, therefore, fashioned in parallel to the thesis advanced in *Modern Epic*, when Franco Moretti speculates that the literary success of *Ulysses* can be attributed to the convergence of literary style and cultural need. Moretti’s key claim is that James Joyce discovered a method of employing the stream of consciousness that palliates the challenges of urban cosmopolitan life, especially in terms of intensified consumption. The literary style offers a template for processing stimuli without becoming overwhelmed: “The hero of *Ulysses* is learning a new art: to see and not to see. Bloom notices everything, but focuses on nothing; a glance, then on again. It

³³¹ Ibid. (220)

³³² Frank Gilbreth. *Primer of Scientific Management*. (74)

³³³ Ibid. (53)

³³⁴ Ibid. (50) That said, Whitson notes that these concerns were laid aside during the war and, by 1916 when Woolf begins writing *Night and Day*, the same magazines were recommending Taylorism as “a way to guarantee the intelligent workman the gains from increased output.” Kevin Whitson. “The Reception of Scientific Management by British Engineers, 1890-1914.” *Business History Review*. (228)

³³⁵ Ibid. (228)

is the metropolitan way: the way to be overwhelmed by the big world that is concentrated in the big city.”³³⁶ Moretti concludes that *Ulysses* “survives because the selection process does not reward novelty as such (Jauss’s violation, or the ‘estrangement’ of the formalists), but *novelty that is able to solve problems*.”³³⁷ I want to suggest that Woolf’s experiments in consciousness are a novelty that solves and perhaps further complicates a set of problems in the administrative sector. Where Moretti highlights how the stream of consciousness serves as a “receiver that captures and organizes fluctuating stimuli,” I add that it can also be an aid for directing attention to processes as they occur.³³⁸

In order to illuminate why an investment in administrative reform might also entail a withdrawal into the mind, I trace a narrative pattern in *Night and Day* in which characters are observed at work by the narrator or themselves. In the novel, Woolf develops a realist strategy for assessing a character’s work performance but, in doing so, encounters three problems: first, the body is relatively static; second, the richness of the character’s mental life may be opaque; and, third, it is tedious to describe and re-describe how signs of mental distraction register on the body. Woolf is nevertheless fascinated by how the mind is occupied at work. Are those mental processes visible? Is it possible to glimpse demotivation? How do people recognize or misrecognize effort? Is recognizing another’s effort a potential site for empathy? Are there structural or cultural limitations to that type of empathy, and is self-awareness at work problematic? The importance of

³³⁶ Franco Moretti. *Modern Epic*. (137)

³³⁷ Ibid. (original emphasis, 178)

³³⁸ Ibid. (135) In some senses, my claim contradicts Moretti’s argument: “The hero of *Ulysses* is learning a new art: to see and not to see. Bloom notices everything, but focuses on nothing; a glance, then on again. It is the metropolitan way: the way to be overwhelmed by the big world that is concentrated in the big city...not an ‘increased awareness,’ but instead an increased absentmindedness.” (137) However, the two can be reconciled by arguing that the stream of consciousness facilitates an understanding of processes by equalizing other claims to attention. It makes focus possible, by making it less important and perhaps less crucial to one’s livelihood.

these questions for Woolf is suggested by the fact that she subjects every major character—Katharine Hilbery, Ralph Denham, the two alternate love interests of Mary Datchett and William Rodney, as well as Katharine's mother Mrs. Hilbery—to the particular scrutiny of being watched while engaged in a task. The narrator lingers longest on the image of a head bowed—be it over book on torts, the unassembled scraps of a biography, a knitted stocking, legal documents, typed invitations to potential donors, the minutes of a meeting, architectural blueprints, doodles, poetry, or mathematical equations.

Moreover, these scenes are not negligible in import for the narrative: Woolf nestles epiphanies and major life decisions in the very scenes where it is difficult to determine a character's level of engagement with the task at hand. Characters decide to quit their jobs immediately or in a few months' time; they realize they are in love or that love is unrequited; and they see the folly of a particular political aim. The action, however, is repetitive, requiring the narrator to toggle between descriptions of the body and the free play of the mind. The middleclass characters in the novel also internalize an implied managerial perspective and assess how their work would be perceived by an outside observer. As I will detail in my analysis of Katharine and Denham, Woolf suggests that self-awareness at work, while not equivalent to paranoia or compulsion, traffics in a similar negative affect. Katharine seems barred from developing a fuller interiority when she internalizes the gaze of a hypothetical observer and Denham is so used to the habits of looking engaged at work that he reflexively checks his watch or tries to look busy, even when alone in his bedroom. Interior monologue corrects for this by removing the third-person vantage of the character: the reader can therefore develop

observational concentration without necessarily turning that gaze inward or imagining her own body under that same gaze.

Claiming that there is a managerial utility in representing the mental processes of characters, I see interior monologue as a supplement to administrative training rather than a radical departure from it, as Majumdar's argues in *Prose of the World*. Majumdar supports his claim with an analysis of the 1923 essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in which Woolf critiques Edwardian materialism for producing a form of narrative accounting: their exacting attention to setting and milieu trains the reader to notice opportunities for real estate speculation, to educate readers about the depreciation of fabrics, to imagine what fabrics moved off shelves and into homes, and generally to keep track of an imagined inventory.³³⁹ As Majumdar writes, Woolf suggests that "a refusal to celebrate 'the crudity and coarseness of human beings' turns the Edwardians into soulless bureaucrats, taking upon themselves the details of rents, wages, calico, and copyhold estates at the expense of the 'astonishing disorder' of the human sensibility."³⁴⁰

For Majumdar, the "collapse of an old constraint" lies not in realism's ceasing to reflect consumer experience in European cosmopolises (as it does for Moretti) but in its representing administrative life too well in the imperial periphery. Colonial bureaucrats found realist literary techniques frustrating because they reproduced the efforts of the day rather than offering respite from them because, as Majumdar explains, "in the realm of the state and the economy, the methods and institutions of bureaucracy reinforce a

³³⁹ "Such (bureaucratic) labor provides socially and economically valuable knowledge but can only be a banalizing model for the art of narrative fiction—"the necessary drudgery of the novelist". In the realm of the state and the economy, the methods and institutions of bureaucracy reinforce a nontranscendental organization of the everyday, and, in fact, the affinities between the bureaucratic systematization of factual information and the banality of realist fiction observed here by Woolf go considerably beyond the metaphor." Saikat Majumdar. *Prose of the World: Modernism and the Banality of Empire*. (10)

³⁴⁰ Ibid. (9)

nontranscendental organization of the everyday, and, in fact, the affinities between the bureaucratic systematization of factual information and the banality of realist fiction observed here by Woolf go considerably beyond the metaphor.”³⁴¹ Woolf appeals to the tastes of the growing professional sector, Majumdar explains, by rejecting the utilitarian objectives of “bureaucratic realism” and by promoting a transcendent experience of the everyday. I concur with Majumdar that Woolf’s experiments in consciousness do not duplicate the “systemization of factual information” but I contend that a transcendent observation of ordinary individuals and processes can nonetheless serve as a useful aid for bureaucratic activity. Even in “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown,” Woolf rejects bureaucratic realism, but she does so by foregrounding the use-value of character. She explains that novels may help readers navigate the marriage market, develop personal networks, and grow their businesses: “Indeed it would be impossible to live for a year without disaster unless one practiced character-reading and had some skill in the art.”³⁴² I suggest that Woolf did replicate bureaucratic tasks, acknowledging that administrative work entails not only tallying inventory, but also studying worker behavior.

Yet, employing a realist style for studying workers proves to be a dreary replication of bureaucratic tasks, much like real estate speculation or stock management can be. And the tedium is uniquely problematic: monitoring a character can be monotonous *and* can engender an uncomfortable form of self-awareness in the reader. The reader may, like Katharine and Denham do, internalize that managerial gaze with similar enervating effects. Thus although Woolf constructs a managerial praxis, in keeping with the use-value of studying character, she also develops a philosophy of the

³⁴¹ Ibid. (10)

³⁴² Virginia Woolf. “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown.” *Critical Essays*. (4)

limits of that practice—and one based in her experience of gender. Denied a threshold of agency in political and administrative spheres because of her sex, Woolf could not supplement her writing with the direct war work, land management, or financial speculation that Lukács admires in the authors who “narrate” like Stendhal, Tolstoy, and Balzac. Woolf’s structural exclusion, however, allows her insight into certain blind spots of the economy, especially when that economy is defined primarily in terms of male wage earners.

Using the structure of a marriage plot, Woolf couples an impoverished law clerk to a daughter of the literary elite in order to suggest a correspondence between their respective desires to be able to pursue more fulfilling work. Katharine wishes to be released from her domestic labor, which is uniquely compensated through a yearly stipend to preserve her grandfather’s literary legacy, and Denham wants to be freed of his regimens of study and self-discipline. The subtlety of Katharine’s labor classification eludes most critics, who tend to evaluate her in terms of a resistance to the “angel of the house” archetype or how her mental distraction, while serving as hostess, might serve as the locus of the narrative in Woolf’s later novels. These insights are inarguably valid, but critics have failed to analyze how her domestic labor is financially compensated, how she daydreams at work, and how her lack of concentration is structurally similar to Denham’s own distraction.

Woolf cannily assesses both how administrative habits can bleed into the home and how difficult it can be to determine when someone stops working. William Rodney, Katharine’s original fiancé, explains, “sometimes when we’re alone, I’ve counted the time on my watch... the time between one remark and the next....And once I counted ten

minutes and twenty seconds, and then, if you'll believe me, she only said 'Um!'"³⁴³

Rodney, upset that Katharine does not participate in conversation, proves his point by repeatedly timing and tracking her performance.³⁴⁴ Woolf may not intend a direct correlation between his actions and his work as a government clerk, but the scene is consistent with a pattern that draws on the managerial connotations of the timepiece. When Denham does additional legal work at home, he cannot maintain focus but, nonetheless, "glanc[es] once or twice at his watch, as if he had set himself a task to be accomplished in a certain measure of time."³⁴⁵ Similarly, the narrator describes how Katharine is financially compensated by a trust to maintain her grandfather's legacy, "but it would have been a surprise, not only to other people but to Katharine herself, if some magic watch could have taken count of the moments spent in an entirely different occupation from her ostensible one."³⁴⁶ Woolf, in essence, makes the case that a stopwatch, which captures the "ostensible" appearance of her daily activity, would miss what was hidden by "the pretense of paper and pen, phrase-making and biography."

The point is underscored again when Katharine develops a daily writing schedule to help her mother finish writing a biography of her grandfather. Studying her mother's face to see if Mrs. Hilbery is, in fact, assembling the anecdotes into order, Katharine notes that "peace and happiness had relaxed every muscle in her face; her lips were parted very slightly, and her breath came in smooth, controlled inspirations like those of a child who is surrounding itself with a building of bricks, and increasing in ecstasy as each

³⁴³ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (155)

³⁴⁴ The stopwatch and its use in monitoring labor performance is central to scientific management.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. (28)

³⁴⁶ Ibid. (37)

brick is placed in position.”³⁴⁷ Katharine’s anxiety is allayed by the evidence, gleaned through a study of expression, that her mother is absorbed in working incrementally towards writing the book. Emboldened, Katharine enjoys the process of observing her mother: “What could the present give, she wondered, to compare with the rich crowd of gifts bestowed by the past? Here was a Thursday morning in process of manufacture; each second was minted fresh by the clock upon the mantelpiece.” Despite the presumed progress, Katharine begins to free-associate and realizes too late that her mother is rummaging in a box, likely stalled again: “How impotent they were, fiddling about all day long with papers! And the clock was striking eleven and nothing done!” Katharine cannot fully indulge in dreamy reminiscences about the past because she needs to keep her mother on task; however, she is also unable to determine when her mother stops working. Further, Woolf suggests that administrative habits are problematic because they can be ineffective or encourage a limited form of self-knowledge. Unlike the more ethically complex forms of self-knowledge, they can produce either an estrangement from the self or an automatic and reflexive behavior, a point I will pursue at greater length in an analysis of Katharine and Denham’s relationship.

Barred access to the upper reaches of political and economic decision-making, Woolf might well refuse to valorize doing and acting over observing and consuming. As she writes in “Women in Fiction,” the female novelist is tempted “to alter the established values—to make serious what appears insignificant to a man, and trivial what is to him important,”³⁴⁸ to challenge the assumption that “a scene in a battlefield is more important

³⁴⁷ Ibid. (99)

³⁴⁸ Virginia Woolf. “Women and Fiction.” *Selected Essays*. (136)

than a scene in a shop.”³⁴⁹ Critics have ably recuperated consumption in Woolf’s oeuvre: Jennifer Wicke, exemplary of this work, writes that the market can be both “a dazzling skin over the stark reality of hegemony” and “a battlefield, or a minefield, or a liquid terrain of experience, choice, agency, and desire exquisitely sensitive to all the ripples that play across its surface.”³⁵⁰ And such scholarly accounts can also reveal how the grid-like schema of production lies just beyond the sensory melee of the market. Wicke claims that Bloomsbury was “an invented community, in intention almost a utopia of and for consumption” but then situates it among British arts movements concerned with “the production of art in an inequitable, and capitalist, society.”³⁵¹ The sensory enticements of the marketplace may feature in Woolf’s writing, but Douglas Mao, writing on Woolf and others, contends that, “under modernism, experience seemed to come into its value not as it transpired, but rather as it was recorded or fixed in the work of art.”³⁵² Bill Brown describes “Solid Objects,” a story that turns beachcombing into an act of production, as “a history of the senses fundamentally altered by the facts of wartime scarcity and postwar depression.”³⁵³ Rebecca Walkowitz writes that Woolf excavates both “useless pleasures and invisible labors” in order to reveal “the social conditions of blindness.”³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One’s Own* (96)

³⁵⁰ Jennifer Wicke. “Mrs. Dalloway Goes to Market: Woolf, Keynes, and Modern Markets.” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* (4)

³⁵¹ Ibid. (4)

³⁵² Mao, Douglas. *Solid Objects: Modernism and the Test of Production*. (36)

³⁵³ Bill Brown. “The Secret Life of Things (Virginia Woolf and the Matter of Modernism)” *Modernism and Modernity*. The realignment of the consuming experience is in line with Michael Tratner’s claim in *Deficits and Desires: Economics and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Literature* that Woolf advocated that “a change in the methods of consumption is the key to avoiding a repetition of World War I.” Essentially, Trainer argues that the Woolfs determined that consumption would avoid the problems of capital accumulation.

³⁵⁴ Rebecca Walkowitz. *Cosmopolitan Style*. (81)

Indeed it bears noting that, if consumption and lures to convince buyers to enter the dizzying marketplace are curiously muted in *Night and Day*, then glimpses of production are more visible than they are in her other novels. In Franco Moretti's *Modern Epic*, the stream of consciousness corrects for a series of tactics in the emerging consumer economy: an influx of global commodities required new methods of storage, which required a new architectural style; the early design layouts of these enormous department stores dazzled customers, some of whom became kleptomaniacs; advertising techniques were developed to direct and diffuse those excessive desires; and finally, the stream of consciousness offered a model for navigating a shifting visual terrain that included a rotation of new products, new spaces, new desires, and new visualizations of those desires. The stream of consciousness then is not merely a transcription of previously undisclosed mental processes, but is also a method of teaching the reader how to process the assault of stimuli circulating in Western European cosmopolises. Furthermore, Moretti creates a direct connection between the stream of consciousness and advertising, as well as an indirect connection to the conspicuous consumption by women, whom he implies were helplessly in thrall to the department stores and advertising.

Perhaps such a reading would be unobjectionable if Moretti's account of consumption was more textured; however, he treats the system as closed, as one in which leisure is not interrupted or compromised by the demands of work. We might note that where Moretti dwells on how a promenade through the city may lead to disorientation and anxiety, thanks to the dazzling display of goods soliciting notice, the character Mary Datchett in *Night and Day* reacts to these stimuli by appreciating the work concealed in

the finished display, as will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. Mary may serve as a rival for Denham's affections, but she is not only an ancillary figure to the courtship plot: instead, her ambitions for professional and political distinction become grist for the novel. Her newfound experience of professional work, in fact, changes her experience of consumption and makes her more aware of the labor processes in shops. Further, in significant long passages, Woolf suggests that Mary's inner life is richest at work, not as a consumer.

Critics have striven in various ways to illuminate fledging modernist techniques and concerns in *Night and Day*, but they have not explained well how these techniques, in their imperfection, really function in this novel. The focus is on the future successes, whereas I argue that there is something to be gained from analyzing the novel in terms of how some of its very goals are thwarted and impeded, and how this occurs especially notably in scenes pertaining to the observation of work. Rather than setting the lamp of narrative focus inside the mind, allowing images to pour in and mingle with memories, I contend, Woolf relies in this novel on techniques for describing seeing a character whose mind is elsewhere—with mixed but ultimately productive results.

Literary Production and Wartime Consumers

During the last year of the Great War, Leonard Woolf organized the 1917 Club to provide artists, politicians, critics, conscientious objectors, and pacifists with a platform for discussing culture. These debates were not apolitical affairs according to party member Duncan Wilson, the club served as “an attempt to provide the Labour Party with some equivalent to those society salons in which it was thought that much of the less

formal business of the Conservative and Liberal parties was conducted.”³⁵⁵ The political was indeed intertwined with the cultural at the 1917 Club: the membership drew from a new generation of nonconformists, as well as the thinned ranks of the Bloomsbury group, about a decade after many of the original members had abandoned both the neighborhood and the moniker. Woolf found the semi-intellectual “Bloomsbury bunnies” and the “Cropheads” to be innocuous enough, but she was suspicious of “The Underworld,” a fluid term in her lexicon that could apply to any unsavory character but, in this context, refers to the professional reviewers and essayists of the Club.³⁵⁶ Woolf’s distaste for the critics was perhaps surprising, given that she was no less concerned with the successes and failures of the writers in their set than they were; by many accounts, she was deeply invested in securing her own position among her literary rivals. The difference, from Woolf’s perspective, was that “The Underworld” seemed concerned more with literary fame than with literary talent.

By the war years, literary connoisseurship was in a certain sense a relatively new business, as Hugh Kenner notes in his literary history, *A Shrinking Island*. Before 1870, British literary masterpieces were also bestsellers, which meant that “the common reader had spotted them quickly.”³⁵⁷ But all of the members of the Bloomsbury group, except for Richard Fry “belonged to the Joyce-Lewis-Pound-Eliot generation, sprung from a

³⁵⁵ Duncan Wilson, as quoted in Mark Hussey’s *Virginia Woolf A to Z*

³⁵⁶ The Underworld was a flexible category and it included all manner of individuals who did not meet Woolf’s approval, including “vulgar” members of the lower classes. In this case, she applies the term to the members of the 1917 Club who were literary critics. (Bell, Quentin. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* Volume 2 (50). To give a sense of how low Woolf’s opinion was of the Underworld: “People have grown much more numerous and much uglier. Each time the door at 1917 Club opens, a fresh deformity enters. I sit in a corner and stare in a kind of trance, as though one had fallen to the bottom of some awful pit in a nightmare. And they’re all quite young—the coming generation—which makes it seem worse. In my youth, though crude, we were invariably lovely—and then what passion we threw into existence!” (1093: Letter to Lady Ottoline Moreell, Mid- November 1919)

³⁵⁷ Hugh Kenner. *A Shrinking Island* (12)

magic decade, the 1880's."³⁵⁸ In other words, they were born roughly ten years after the economics of literary production turned from a supply-side model, in which content and distribution were limited, to a demand-side model in which early market segmentation developed. The "Underworld" literary critics who unnerved Woolf so had never known the ease of picking a canonical text through popular vote; instead they had to negotiate what Michael Levenson calls the "micro-sociology of modernist innovation."³⁵⁹ Like stockbrokers with eyes fixed on ticker tape, these young men kept track of how many books were sold or remaindered. They listened to gossip, not to gather material for a character study or to be entertained by the sexual liaisons of a diverse cast of bohemian characters, but instead as a form of insider trading. To secure cultural capital, tastemakers needed to make endorsements and to abandon a literary figure at the right moment. Consumption was, in this sense, evolving into an art and a fledgling business.

Woolf's assessment of the young critics was, in part, a form of self-preservation. Financially and creatively, she too had to navigate the "micro-sociology of modernist innovation" and the stakes were particularly high for *Night and Day*. The novel was started, composed, and published during a period of personal and historical crisis. Recovering from a debilitating mental health episode that resulted in a suicide attempt, she had to convince herself, her husband, and her family that she could maintain her sanity while writing. If she could not manage to stay composed during the process, she would not be able to continue her literary career. Further, her mental health was made more unsteady by a war that disrupted both her friend network and the evolving cultural economy of literature. Christine Froula describes Virginia Woolf's diary as "one of the

³⁵⁸ Ibid. (163)

³⁵⁹ Michael Levenson. *A Genealogy of Modernism; A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922*. (6)

century's great civilian war documents" because it "traces the close grain of everyday life as public violence ruins private houses..."³⁶⁰ This is to say that if Woolf struggled so manifestly to find tranquility during the relative peace of the period in which her first novel was composed, then that challenge was surely compounded by the war. Publishing with a more established press, Woolf had to appeal to a broader audience that wanted more traditional fare, as well as to the tastes of her friends and critics who wanted something new. I argue that Woolf connects these different audiences by drawing on her experience of being intensely monitored during her mental health crisis in order to comment on the experience of being watched at work.

Woolf had already failed to navigate a changing literary landscape with her first novel. Writing to her brother-in law Clive Bell in 1909, six years before *The Voyage Out* would be published, Woolf describes her struggles to forgo public opinion for the sake of innovation: "Very difficult to fight against the inkling of the way the book might be written by other people and to ignore the opinion of one's probable readers."³⁶¹ Updating him on her progress a year later, she redoubles her commitment to originality, stating that she "had given up adventuring after other people's forms."³⁶² Her willingness to break with generic norms was rewarded eventually, inasmuch as the aesthetic merits of *The Voyage Out* have since been enumerated by critics; at the time, however, the public was not exactly clamoring for another novel in this style. If the "Underworld" art critics had studied her accounts, they would have discovered that *The Voyage Out* found a limited

³⁶⁰ Christine Froula. "War, Peace, Internationalism." *Cambridge Guide to Bloomsbury*. (107)

³⁶¹ 1: 383 Letter to Clive Bell 2/7/1909. (*sic*)

³⁶² 1: 446 Letter to Clive Bell 12/29/10. Woolf does not consult Bell's opinion for *Night and Day*. At that point, he and Vanessa were living separately and Woolf declared that she would wait for "the people whose judgment I respect." (*Diary*, 307)

readership. Fifteen years after its publication, only 2,000 copies were sold and the profits from those sales did not net even 120 pounds.³⁶³ To give a sense of just how disappointing those sales were, Joyce Piell Wexler claims that, “throughout the modernist period, three thousand copies constituted a standard first printing for a novel.”³⁶⁴ Concerns about her own literary status and the reception of her work, among other traumas and anxieties,³⁶⁵ led to one of the most significant periods of mental anguish in her life.

Shortly after the publication of *The Voyage Out* in 1915, Woolf began to experience an acute pain in the back of her skull that she described alternatively as the throbbing ache of a rotten tooth lodged in her jaw or, in a more gruesome metaphor, as a “rat-gnawing” pain. Most days, she would alternate between complaints of these pains and obsessive ramblings about her various bodily functions, in which she was disgusted by the needs of her mouth and her bowels. She heard the voice of her king in the bushes, the chorus of a Greek tragedy in the warble of the birds, and the sound of phantom neighbors walking the halls upstairs. The insomnia that plagued her as a young woman had returned and days passed without sleep. She was kept awake with worries about her art and “whether it might not be torn to shreds by a discharge of cruel laughter,” as her nephew Quentin Bell described her fears sixty-seven years later.³⁶⁶ *The Voyage Out*, in Bell’s account, had been too taxing a project and, in it, she had revealed too much of her

³⁶³ Woolf had received money from a 2,500 pound inheritance in 1909, so she did not need to rely on her writing income to sustain her.

³⁶⁴ “A typical contract would call for royalties beginning at 20 percent and rising with sales to 30 percent. On a six-shilling novel, a writer could earn 180 pounds, or \$900, if the first edition sold out.” Wexler, Joyce Piell. *Who Paid for Modernism?: Art, Money, and the Fiction of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence* (11)

³⁶⁵ Woolf is believed to have suffered sexual abuse at the hands of her half-brothers Gerald and George Duckworth. This was coupled with her fears about the war and a lingering depression that persisted since her mother’s death when Woolf was only thirteen.

³⁶⁶ Quentin Bell. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*. (11)

own mental state. Bell explains how she “succeeded in bringing some of the devils who dwelt within her mind hugely and gruesomely from the depths, and she had gone too far for comfort.”³⁶⁷

Following a period of institutionalization in a convalescent home,³⁶⁸ Woolf moved with Leonard to a house in the country, where she was monitored by upwards of four nurses at a time. Her diet was supplemented by regular doses of milk and barbiturates; her schedule was filled with doctors’ visits—so many, in fact, that Leonard’s careful budgets had to be amended several times. Fearing that writing would cause her to relapse, Leonard restricted the amount time she could devote to *Night and Day*, as Virginia describes in a letter to Lytton Strachey: “My industry has the most minute results and I begin to despair of finishing a book on this method—I wrote one sentence—the clock strikes—Leonard appears with a glass of milk. However, I daresay it don’t matter much.”³⁶⁹ Woolf’s sense of time fleeting likely reflected the reality of the situation because, as Leonard Woolf describes in his autobiography, her writing process was particularly arduous for this novel:

She wrote only in the morning from 10 till 1, and usually she typed out in the afternoon what she had written by hand in the morning, but all day long, when she was walking through London streets or on the Sussex Downs, the book would be moving subconsciously in her mind, or she herself would be moving in a dreamlike way through the book. It was this intense absorption which made her writing so mentally exhausting for her.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Ibid. (42)

³⁶⁸ According to Susan Merrill Squier, Woolf was exhausted by the effort to complete her first novel, was prescribed rest/balanced meals/doses of Robin’s Hypophosphate, and then was sent to Twickenham convalescent home, where she endured the rest cure administered by Silas Weir Mitchell. In March of 1915, her recovery ended and a temporary move to Richmond seemed like it would be permanent. Susan Merrill Squier. “Tradition and Revision: The Classic City Novel and Virginia Woolf’s *Night and Day*.” *Women Writers and the City: Essays in Feminist Literary Criticism*. (114-133)

³⁶⁹ 775: Letter to Lytton Strachey 7/25/16

³⁷⁰ Leonard Woolf. *Downhill All the Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919-1939*.

As Leonard recounts, the novel was written in a piecemeal fashion and on a strictly regimented schedule but there were also allowances for a more diffuse and constant form of engagement. In her own retrospective account of these same events, Virginia concurs that the writing process was anguished:

After being ill and suffering every form and variety of nightmare and extravagant intensity of perception...when I came to, I was so tremblingly afraid of my own insanity that I wrote *Night and Day* mainly to prove to my own satisfaction that I could keep entirely off that dangerous ground. I wrote it, lying in bed, allowed to write for only one half hour a day. And I made myself copy from plaster casts, partly to tranquilise, partly to learn anatomy. Bad as the book is, it composed my mind, and I think taught me certain elements of composition which I should not have had the patience to learn had I been in full flush of health always.

Leonard's estimate of one hour for composition, as well as time spent typing, is reduced here to a mere half hour. Rather than describe the long, leisurely walks through London's thoroughfares as Leonard does, Woolf focuses on her confinement in bed and the forced inactivity of her rest cure. *Night and Day* was written piecemeal, but her ability to maintain composure during its composition was integral to convincing Leonard that she could pursue her career without risking another suicide attempt.³⁷¹ Once she proved capable of writing without a relapse, Woolf then needed to demonstrate that she could accept the disappointment of poor book sales and negative criticism without self-harm. The high wire act was made more challenging because Woolf could neither tailor the novel to the avant-garde tastes of the members of the 1917 Club and its "Underworld" critic faction, nor could she pretend that their opinions were negligible.

Woolf may have spent her nights worrying about the possible "discharge of cruel laughter" or the callous reviews penned by cynical careerists, but she was less prepared

³⁷¹ She was not altogether successful because Leonard attributed her depression of 1918 to her difficulty at finishing *Night and Day*.

for the reception that did meet *Night and Day*. An article entitled “A Ship Comes into the Harbour” taught her that criticism could be a powerful force, both revelatory and transformative. In eight paragraphs, Katharine Mansfield distills the missteps and failures of *Night and Day* in such a precise way that her thoughts loom over any discussion of the novel afterwards:

We had thought that this world was vanished for ever, that it was impossible to find on the great ocean of literature a ship that was unaware of what has been happening. Yet here is ‘Night and Day’ fresh, new, and exquisite, a novel in the tradition of the English novel. In the midst of our admiration it makes us feel old and chill; we had never thought to look upon its like again!³⁷²

In her review, Mansfield captures both the traditional pleasures available in the work and the absolute impossibility of those pleasures after the historical watershed of the First World War. The novel, in other words, produces a kind of cognitive dissonance, akin to setting a Victorian dollhouse in the middle of the trenches of No-Man’s-Land. In a conversation with Woolf some months after the review had been published, Mansfield tempered her criticism by saying that the novel was “an amazing accomplishment” and went so far as to declare that she knew its intricacies so well that she “could pass an examination in it.”³⁷³ Privately, though, Mansfield’s critique was far more trenchant: she called the novel “a lie to the soul” and, after the war, she felt “the *profoundest* sense that nothing can ever be the same—that, as artists, we are traitors, if we feel otherwise: we have to take it into account and find new expressions, new moulds for our new thoughts and feelings .”³⁷⁴

³⁷² Katherine Mansfield. “A Ship Comes into the Harbour.” *Novels and Novelists* (111) .

³⁷³ Quentin Bell. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*. (50). The comment could be interpreted as quite cutting, if it references the same phrase used in *Night and Day*. In the Kew gardens scene, Katharine listens to Ralph describe his family life, but her mind is preoccupied by more important matters: “She listened to all this, so that she could have passed an examination in it by the time Waterloo Bridge was in sight; and yet she was no more listening to it than she was counting the paving-stones at her feet.” (*ND*, 289) Mansfield could be insinuating that she knows the book well, but is still utterly unconcerned with its contents.

³⁷⁴ Before one begins to think that Woolf was ill-used by Mansfield, it is good to remember that Woolf has her own private thoughts about the authoress. During the preparation of Mansfield’s story “The Prelude”

Perhaps some of this advice was transmitted in the conversations about literature that followed. Pericles Lewis contends that Mansfield's influence on the author's later works was profound: "Mansfield's criticism of *Night and Day* as 'Jane Austen up-to-date' stung Woolf, who, in three of her major modernist novels of the 1920s, grappled with the problem of how to represent the chasm in historical experience presented by the war."³⁷⁵ It is true that, a few months after her last meeting with Mansfield, Woolf began working on the style that she would perfect over the course of the decade: "For I figure that the approach will be entirely different this time: no scaffolding; scarcely a brick to be seen; all crepuscular, but the heart, the passion, humour, everything as bright as fire in the mist."³⁷⁶ The journal entry indicates that the transformation of her literary practice will be stylistic, not rooted in content or in an excavation of war themes. She focuses instead on the edifices and structures that will be removed or hidden in order to illuminate what is already there. Acknowledging that the novel may not satisfy her readers, Woolf anticipates Mansfield's criticism that *Night and Day* is slight because it traffics in trivial emotions:

I suppose I lay myself open to the charge of niggling with emotions that don't really matter....And yet I can't help thinking that, English fiction being what it is, I compare for originality & sincerity rather will with Most of the moderns. L[eonard Woolf] finds the philosophy very melancholy....Yet if one is to deal with people on a large scale & say what

for the Hogarth press, Woolf writes: "We could both wish that our first impression of K. M. [Katherine Mansfield] was not that she stinks like a—well, civet cat that had taken to street walking. In truth, I'm a little shocked by her commonness at first sight; lines so hard and cheap. However, when this diminishes, she is so intelligent and inscrutable that she repays friendship." Virginia Woolf. *A Moment's Liberty*. (Diary entry 10/11/17)

³⁷⁵ Pericles Lewis. *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*. (112). Woolf's reaction to Mansfield's criticism seems to be slightly more complicated than Lewis is able to parse in his brief essay. In a letter to Clive Bell, she writes that she does not understand the thrust of the criticism: "I couldn't grasp what Katherine meant but thought she disliked the book and wouldn't say so, and so muffed her points." (1099: Letter to Clive Bell 11/27/19). She also suggests that the comparison to Austen originates in a different review: "Then there's the man who says I'm Jane Austen (but I'd much rather write about tea parties and snails than be Jane Austen)." (1094: Letter to Margaret Llewelyn Davies 11/16/19)

³⁷⁶ Virginia Woolf. *Diaries*

one thinks, how can one avoid melancholy? I don't admit to being hopeless though—only the spectacle is a profoundly strange one; & the process of discarding the old, when one is by no means certain what to put in their place is a sad one.³⁷⁷

Her experiments with character, she expects, will prove to be even more unpalatable because she rejects the Victorian models without knowing how precisely to surpass them.

I argue that, in her particular way of directing her attention to the working lives of upper- middle-class professionals, Woolf stumbles on a limit in realism. Realist literature is a useful supplement to administrative theory, when the focus of attention is trained on setting and space; the style becomes more problematic when individual behavior and productivity becomes the object of attention. If we compare the first image of *Night and Day* to the first in *Jacob's Room*, the experimental novel that follows, we can see that one way that Woolf reveals “the fire in the mist” is by removing the layers of narration and external observation of a person at work. In the next section, I note how the image of Katharine Hilbery is replicated three times in quick succession and, each time, the reader is invited to determine whether she is working or not. In contrast, the fact that Betty Flanders is writing a letter is conveyed through her perception of objects and scenery: “Slowly welling from the point of her gold nib, pale blue ink dissolved the full stop; for there her pen stuck; her eyes fixed, and tears slowly filled them. The entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled...”³⁷⁸ Attention is not directed to establishing that she sits with her head bowed over the papers, a pen in her hand, and tears in her eyes; it is instead diverted to what she perceives.

The status of *Night and Day* is affected by its order in Woolf's canon; the novel's

³⁷⁷ Ibid. (Diary entry 3/27/19)

³⁷⁸ Virginia Woolf. *Jacob's Room*. (1)

failures are often considered more glaring because Woolf retreats from, rather than builds on the successes of her more stylistically and psychologically innovative debut effort *The Voyage Out*. Kenneth Burke wrote: “If *Night and Day* had been followed by *The Voyage Out*, one could explain very glibly that the first book was a mere blind tentative. But as the books were written in reverse order, it seems that Mrs. Woolf did not realize her own distinctions.”³⁷⁹ Pericles Lewis describes how Woolf “tentatively embraced modernist techniques” in her first novel but “returned to many Victorian conventions” by her second.³⁸⁰ Susan Leonardi summarizes the critical response by describing *Night and Day* as essentially a “voyage back.”³⁸¹ These assessments are descriptive rather than diagnostic and do not consider *why* Woolf adapts her literary style to a more traditional format. To approach the problem differently: *Night and Day* might be worthy of study precisely because of its order in Woolf’s canon. I argue that the novel is unlike Woolf’s other fiction because her imagined audience was different from any other she attempted to court. Studying the novel reveals much about Woolf’s development as a writer, her experience of the war, and the concerns of art production during the war.

While *Night and Day* was written decades after the era of critically lauded bestsellers, it was also written at the cusp of the emergence of “the fragile economy of patron-investors,” outlined by Lawrence Rainey.³⁸² Rainey explains how canonical works of high modernism were in a sense selected by investors who used the small press system to build and then manipulate a market for bespoke literary production. At the

³⁷⁹ Kenneth Burke. “The Modern English Novel Plus.” *Dial*. (572-5)

³⁸⁰ Pericles Lewis. *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (112)

³⁸¹ Susan J Leonardi. “Bare Places and Ancient Blemishes: Virginia Woolf’s Search for New Language in *Night and Day*.” (150-63)

³⁸² Lawrence Rainey. “The cultural economy of Modernism.” *Cambridge Guide to Modernism*. (73)

time Woolf was writing *Night and Day*, these investors, who intervened in the valuation of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," had not yet become involved in book collecting, nor had independent booksellers had not yet started price-fixing the small batch printings of limited editions, like James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce Piell Wexler, in fact, argues that "the early publishing experiences of modernist writers were more typical of commercially successful novelists than they or their partisans admitted."³⁸³ Modernist authors differed from Victorian and commercial novelists, she claims, because of a crisis of confidence in the "apprenticeship" model that required writers to revise according to standards set by censors and editors: "Having based their rhetorical decisions on conceptions of readers partly formed by publishers' advice, modernists lost confidence in their advisors when the public did not respond as predicted."³⁸⁴ As a result, the publishing landscape widened to include private publishers, patrons, and expatriate presses in foreign countries, which were interested in pushing the limits of censorship. At the same time, Wexler argues, that British publishers began to develop a serious fiction portfolio: with decreasing printing costs, "editors were committed to improving literary quality because they understood the economic advantages of the steady seller as well as the bestseller."³⁸⁵ When Woolf composed *Night and Day*, the value of experimental work was still being determined and adjusted.

Neither Rainey nor Wexler include Woolf in their survey of the modernist cultural

³⁸³ Joyce Piell Wexler. *Who Paid for Modernism?: Art, Money, and the Fiction of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence*. (19)

³⁸⁴ Ibid. (13)

³⁸⁵ Ibid. (126) "Because profits vary with costs, publishers had an incentive for supporting minority fiction. Although it addressed only the most literate segment of the market, original work by unpublished writers or writers whose work sold slowly could be bought more cheaply than a manuscript by an established writer. A cheap manuscript by a serious writer could earn a favorable return on the firm's investment no less successfully than an expensive book by a popular author....Profits offset losses because 'the latter are limited in extent, while the former are not.'" (9)

economy; other critics, however, have noted that her position in literary history was secured, in part, because of her small press and through her affiliation to the well-connected Bloomsbury group. The period of time spent composing *Night and Day* was unique in that sense because she did not yet have a firm command over either of those critical components of her legacy. Noting that her intimates and their children maintained careful records of Woolf's letters, diaries, juvenilia, and anecdotes, Kenner writes: "Indeed, tending the legend of Virginia Woolf may be thought of as a Bloomsbury cottage industry."³⁸⁶ Christine Froula approaches the relationship between author and group by foregrounding its symbiotic quality:

Leonard Woolf would have been Leonard Woolf, Keynes Keynes, and Freud Freud without Bloomsbury, but what would Virginia Woolf have been without Bloomsbury? And what would Bloomsbury be without her?³⁸⁷

But although Woolf's work was shaped and later preserved by friends and family, her personal network had only begun to be rebuilt during the composition of *Night and Day*; indeed, her correspondence from this period shows concern over her shrinking acquaintanceship.³⁸⁸ In a letter to Lytton Strachey, she writes: "I can't feel altogether sure that you still persist in the flesh—my friends—ah, but Sydney Waterlow tells me I have none."³⁸⁹ She blames her convalescence, which required both her isolation in the country and a monitoring and limiting of her correspondence. The war further scattered her friends, which she describes in a letter to Ka Cox:

I am afraid that all my friends are dead. Most it is true I don't miss at all—

³⁸⁶ Hugh Kenner. *A Sinking Island: The Modern English Writers*. (166)

³⁸⁷ Christine Froula. *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde*. (16)

³⁸⁸ Letter to Duncan Grant: "You said you would like gossip. I collect what I can, and prick up my ears in company, but my opportunities are not what they were. People don't seem to trust me now, except poor old zannies like Margery Olivier..."

³⁸⁹ 732: Letter to Lytton Strachey, 10/22/15

I rather like snuffing their graces when I go into London—Ottoline and such like, I mean. But I don't want poor Bruin dead just yet.. I am often seriously alarmed when I hear that the zeppelins have been over London, but accounts from Sydney and Nessa prove that you never turn a hair, but merely take a look at them, put the cowards in the cellar, and then walk the streets till you've seen all the fires!

With gallows humor, Woolf alludes to the constriction of her network and a lingering anxiety that she will lose the good opinion of her remaining friends.

By 1917, the Woolfs bought the Hogarth Press, which would be the method of publishing Virginia's more experimental work, but at first they were not capable of printing anything longer than stories, essays, and poetry.³⁹⁰ Without the niche market of literary production firmly in place and without the autonomy afforded by the Hogarth Press, Woolf had to submit her manuscript to her stepbrother Gerald Duckworth at his larger publishing house. To say that Duckworth might not have been the best publisher is to put it mildly. First, the publication date had to be pushed back a month because he lost the last chapter. Second and more substantially, the Duckworth brothers were targets of critique in the novel: the original plan for *Night and Day* was to represent Vanessa Bell's struggles to pursue her artistic ambitions while also serving as the family hostess under George Duckworth's coercion.³⁹¹ Reading *Night and Day*, in fact, did affect Vanessa deeply, as Woolf notes in their correspondence about the novel:

...I think I'd rather please you than anyone, if only because I feel that its all your doing if I have any wits at all. Where should I have been if it hadn't been for you, when Hyde Park Gate was at its worst? You must admit the Apes were a fair handful in those days....I'm a little surprised that it gives you the horrors. When I was writing it, I didn't think it was

³⁹⁰ Including Katherine Mansfield's short story "Prelude," Freud's work on psychoanalysis, and T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*.

³⁹¹ In describing the biographical content of the novel, Woolf writes: "But try thinking of Katharine [Hilbery] as Vanessa, not me; and suppose her concealing a passion for painting and forced to go out into society by George [Duckworth]—that was the beginning of her; *but* as one goes on, all sorts of things happen." (1095: Letter to Janet Case 11/19/19)

much like our particular Hell—but one never knows.³⁹²

It is difficult to reconcile the placid novel of manners in Mansfield's review with the novel of "horrors" that Bell reads. Her sister's interpretation underscores how difficult it must have been for Woolf to submit her manuscript for Duckworth's approval. If the "Apes" are, as is generally assumed, the Duckworth brothers, the description of "our particular Hell" intimates how fraught the relationship was during their adolescence. The bond between step-siblings was not much improved by the war; Gerald Duckworth deeply disapproved of Virginia's friends, the conscientious objectors.³⁹³ Woolf's novel, therefore, had to be carefully positioned: *Night and Day* had to conceal its particular critique of the Stephen household and its general pacifist sentiments, while simultaneously appealing to a broader reading public.³⁹⁴

Given Mansfield's comment that "we had thought that this world was vanished for ever, that it was impossible to find on the great ocean of literature a ship that was unaware of what has been happening," it may be surprising to suggest that the traditionalism of *Night and Day* signals Woolf's responsiveness to audience demand during the war. But, as Hugh Kenner notes, the Great War created a market for nostalgia:

Adults could welcome any link with the time in which they had spent most of their lives, and it's unsurprising that the Georgian anthologies sold well and kept selling, ever reprinted, reprinted. They could reassure turners of pages, as they had while war still raged, that civilization in the old sense was within call.³⁹⁵

Kenner notes that these sales peaked around 1922, a full three years after *Night and Day*

³⁹² 1086: Vanessa Bell (10/27/19)

³⁹³ In a letter to Vanessa Bell, Woolf writes: "He treated us all as small children, and it made me feel how hopelessly in the minority we are." 752: Letter to Vanessa Bell 4/14/16

³⁹⁴ Virginia Woolf. *Diaries*. (238)

³⁹⁵ Hugh Kenner. *The Shrinking Island*. (152)

was published. And so we might speculate that, if *Night and Day* had truly been “unaware of what has been happening....fresh, new, and exquisite, a novel in the tradition of the English novel” as Katharine Mansfield claims, it might have been more successful.

Indeed, if one strain of Woolf criticism notes the novel’s traditionalism, another describes how Woolf anticipates the concerns of modernism by smuggling more innovative techniques, questions, ambiguities, and style into the traditional narrative format. Such scholarship excavates the modern geographical signifiers, psychological theory, philosophy of vagueness, and language games available in the work.³⁹⁶ According to this critical perspective, *Night and Day* does not reflect back on what Mansfield calls “the tradition of the English novel” or what Kenner describes as “civilization in the old sense” but instead encourages readers to imagine a different connection—not to contemplate the time in which most adults “had spent their lives” but to imagine how they would spend their lives after the war. I add to this body of analysis by arguing that Woolf draws on classical literary structures to smuggle in a critique of the war, the Empire, and its administration, and conventional pathways for ambition.

Although Mansfield is correct that *Night and Day* lacks direct criticism of, or even reference to, war, the novel nonetheless bears war’s imprint. Fussell describes how the War’s impact on culture was inescapable:

Nobody alive during the war, whether a combatant or not, ever got over its special diction and system of metaphor, its whole jargon of techniques and tactics and strategy....*And often what impressed itself so deeply was something more than language.* Not a few works written during the war, and written about matters far distant from the war, carry more of the war about them than is always

³⁹⁶ See examples: Ruth Murray Underhill, George M. Johnson, Andrea Zemgulys, Susan Leonardi, Helen Wussow, Susan Merrill Squier, Megan M. Quigley.

recognized.³⁹⁷

Military metaphors and conceptual frameworks pervade modernist cultural products, even when the work seems untouched by martial concerns. *Night and Day* includes several passages where the mundane is interrupted with violent metaphors, such as Katharine's observation during a party scene: "'Don't you see how many different things these people care about? And I want to beat them down—I only mean,' she corrected herself, 'that I want to assert myself, and it's difficult, if one hasn't a profession.'"³⁹⁸ With even greater specificity, Katharine then exclaims: "Ah, but I want to trample upon their prostrate bodies!"³⁹⁹ We might note that Woolf's dialogue registers the confluence of aggression and professionalization. Katharine's interjection, among other scenes, intimates something akin to Rebecca Walkowitz's claim about her later writings: "[Woolf] contests the war by rejecting its models of attention. Woolf approaches the war parenthetically, never erasing its violence but not allowing violence to absorb, in the total attention violence demands, the partial attention that resists it."⁴⁰⁰

Fussell's argument implies something more than searching the texts for key words. His work is an invitation to consider how the war impacted culture beyond vernacular drift, since "often what impressed itself so deeply was something more than language."⁴⁰¹ Fussell notes that administration and its theory were particularly influenced by the language of war.⁴⁰² And the slippage of vocabulary from the military complex to

³⁹⁷ Paul Fussell. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. (my emphasis, 68)

³⁹⁸ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (49)

³⁹⁹ Ibid. (49)

⁴⁰⁰ Rebecca Walkowitz. *Cosmopolitan Style*. (101) "Her point is not simply to create a new ideal of attentiveness, more expansive and extensive, but to display the customs and conventions, social and psychological, that control what can be seen and what can be said. (83)

⁴⁰¹ Paul Fussell. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. (14)

⁴⁰² "Popular discussion of economics relies heavily on terms like *sector* ("The public vs. the private sector"), and the conduct of labor politics would be a very different thing without the military jargon (like

state administration intuitively makes sense because, as the political theorist Alexander Anievas has more recently outlined in *Capital, the State and War*, the two institutions were deeply imbricated in one another. Anievas argues that the circulation of goods through new or hostage colonial markets, as necessitated by global-imperial capitalism, intensified the need for defense against nation-state competition. Further, as Harry Shutt writes, the ruling classes determined that technological advancements of the Second Industrial Revolution, such as electricity and petroleum, could not be sufficiently protected during the war by laissez-faire capitalism. The economy, therefore, shifted to a public ownership of natural monopolies, as well expanding its suite of social services. Public servants thus comprised a growing proportion of the workforce. In addition, the need for men at the front—in both combat and labor capacities—required the incorporation of thousands of colonial troops, which complicated colonial administration both during and after the war. One response to new economic planning and industry development, as Kevin Whitson notes, was to scrutinize worker productivity in ways that had been previously resisted, as for example via the scientific management techniques proposed by Frederic Taylor and other worker-centered efficiency programs.⁴⁰³ That is to say, as the administrative labor market grew, there was also a corresponding crisis in confidence over traditional administrative methods.

Woolf likely would not have been directly aware of these specific administrative trends. Yet the subject was an integral part of her milieu, since many of her friends shaped or were shaped by administrative theory. And around the time of *Night and Day*

rank and file) which it appropriated from the war.” (author’s emphasis)

⁴⁰³ Kevin Whitson. “The Reception of Scientific Management by British Engineers, 1890-1914.” *Business History Review*. (207-29)

in particular, those dynamics were in flux: if a number of her acquaintances receded during this period, she also cultivated deeper connections with conscientious objectors and those connected to administration of the war.⁴⁰⁴ I argue that Woolf incorporates the perspectives of her friends and also reaches toward a broader audience by, in effect, using a traditional third-person narrator to assess the productivity—in terms of physical movements *and* mental attention—of characters. Woolf knits together a constellation of different potential reader demographics by locating the shared experience of observing and being observed at work. As the managerial effort to increase productivity by studying worker behavior was gaining theoretical purchase, Woolf was discovering the drawbacks of surveillance and, specifically, the internalization of that monitoring.

There was certainly an irony in this project, in that many of her friends, who were the children of colonial and state administrators, found themselves managed and scrutinized in compulsory farm work in lieu of military service. Woolf initially imagines that the farm labor will aid Duncan Grant in his artistic work:

[Duncan Grant] came up after a week of it and says he finds it all very soothing, and all his faculties sink to sleep. He is out picking Big Bug off the currant bushes for 8 hours a day; sleeps all night, paints on Sundays. I daresay he will paint better, though I think he's very good; but sitting over one's work in Fitzroy Street, with a pat of butter turning yellow in a paint box seems to me infernally dreary...⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴ Leonard, a former colonial bureaucrat, became more entrenched in the journalistic and political cultures of London society by becoming an authority on the problems of colonial administration and British Imperialism. H.A.L. Fisher, a cousin of Woolf's, was a historian during the war who also served as a cabinet minister; Dame Rose Macaulay worked as a clerk for various war departments including combat exemptions and information; she also kept an acquaintanceship with a variety of review editors and publishers. The conscientious objectors in her circle included, but were not limited to: John Maynard Keynes who served the Treasury; Clive Bell, whose pacifist pamphlet was burned publicly by order of the mayor of London, worked on a farm at Garsington Manor; Duncan Grant and Duncan Grant worked at Newhouse Farm as an exemption from combat service; Adrian Stephen worked on a farm until a medical condition prevented him from continuing; Roger Fry tried to parlay his war photography exhibit into a bid as a war photographer; Bertrand Russell who was sent to Brixton Prison for his opposition to the war, Lytton Strachey.

⁴⁰⁵ 770: Letter to Katherine Cox 6/25/16

A few months later, however, Woolf suggests that the agricultural work has lost its allure and that it is more desirable if one is the proprietor: “Adrian and Gerald [Shove]... dont want to become agricultural laborers. Having ones own land of course, makes all the difference, and I daresay they’ll all try to come to Wissett...”⁴⁰⁶ Perhaps Woolf’s musings did not describe the recognized animosity growing between Garsington and his upper-middle class farmhands, but were influenced by her own experience under scrutiny. She balked at the experience of being monitored so intensely by Leonard, who feared her writing would cause her to relapse into mental despair. And thus, I will argue, the novel first critiques the practice of observing a character at work and then moves to investigate consciousness more directly. This division of the book is perhaps reflected in the early responses to the novel, as Woolf writes to Clive Bell: “some say the first chapters are the best, and others say the last, and some say its in the tradition, and others say its not, but the great battle, so Murry tells me, is between those who think it unreal and those who think it real...All this ought to make it sell, but Gerald [Duckworth] remarks that that’s out of the question with a 9/-book.”⁴⁰⁷

The Great War changed the landscape of work by disrupting fantasies of upward mobility, allowing marginalized groups to participate in socially recognized forms of work, and elevating the labor that goes into social reproduction. Woolf’s novel may seem untouched by the war, but it criticizes administrative techniques and begins to sketch out how the aims of imperial administration produce a restrictive account of human capacity and experience; more generally, it is deeply invested in the category of

⁴⁰⁶ 776: Letter to Vanessa Bell 6/30/16

⁴⁰⁷ 1099: Letter to Clive Bell 11/27/19

work, the recognition of work, the role of ambition, and the abandonment of conventional investments in mobility. Thus it complicates Hugh Kenner's contention that,

save for Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Bloomsbury writing implied little direct awareness that the war had happened. What it did show awareness of was literary fashion; and though it registered fashion far less crudely than did poor noisy Edith Sitwell, whose propelling rage was the rage to seem up-to-date, still it's permissible to feel a suspicion that one of the things self-awareness cushioned it from was the world outside the window.⁴⁰⁸

Kenner's account privileges the combat experience of the war and minimizes civilian, administrative, labor, and pacifist perspectives; in so doing, it neglects a novel like *Night and Day*. That text, I argue, does offer a glimpse into British life during the historical transformation of the war, and Woolf's status as a privileged, civilian, female pacifist, suffering from mental health problems, offers a specific vantage point. Catering to an audience both broad and narrow, Woolf developed a literary technique that, however problematic, permits her to critique the restrictive account of human capacity and experience during the war. That is to say, Woolf's "awareness...of literary fashion" and even "self-awareness" are forms of perception that are structurally connected to "the world outside the window."

The Amateur Worker

Two months after Virginia Woolf's suicide in 1941, E. M. Forster gave a lecture on her body of work to an audience at Cambridge. Perhaps his remarks were shaped by his established interest in round and flat characters, but perhaps he was also guided by the

⁴⁰⁸ Hugh Kenner. *A Shrinking Island*. (164)

solemnity of the occasion. For his analysis turns to the potential afterlife of Woolf's characters:

Now there seem to be two sorts of life in fiction, life on the page, and life eternal. Life on the page she could give; her characters never seem unreal, however slight or fantastic their lineaments, and they can be trusted to behave appropriately. Life eternal she could seldom give; she could seldom so portray a character that it was remembered afterwards on its own account as Emma is remembered, for instance, or Dorothea Casaubon, or Sophia and Constance in *The Old Wives' Tale*.⁴⁰⁹

In Forster's estimation, the seaside villages, country hamlets, cruise ships, and London neighborhoods in Woolf's fiction yield only four memorable characters: time passes and the reader can see Clarissa Dalloway clearly, along with the dimmer recollections of Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* and the Ramsay couple from *To the Lighthouse*.

What persists instead, he argues, is her rhythm of language, her poetic imagery, and her abiding interest in the processes of the mind. Forster then adds a pragmatic reason for the ephemeral quality of her characters: "socially she is limited to the upper-middle professional classes, and she does not even employ many types."⁴¹⁰ Twenty years later, another influential cultural critic found Woolf's limited range of character types lacking, especially in comparison with the realist tradition. The Marxist Georg Lukács, however, faults Woolf for not marking her professional characters' experiences as classed and for not subsuming bourgeois experience within a broader sociocultural framework. He argues that her characters are not slight, as Forster contends, but weighted too heavily because their subjective experiences threaten to eclipse objective reality. Without these twin ballasts, she cannot emulate the "great realist writer," who can "grasp and portray

⁴⁰⁹ Forster, E.M. "Virginia Woolf by E.M. Forster." *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs and Commentary*, ed. Stanford Patrick Rosenbaum. (229)

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. (230)

trends and phenomena truthfully in their historical development—‘trends’ not so much in the social and political field, as in that area where human behavior is moulded and evaluated, where existing types are developed further and new types emerge.”⁴¹¹

The criticisms offered by the two writers, who differ in terms of style and politics, suggest that Woolf fails to negotiate the issues of character because she focuses too narrowly on the mental processes of the upper-middle professional classes. Perhaps, though, these critiques reveal normative assumptions, not shared by Woolf, about what character can accomplish. In her own survey of the realist literature from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Woolf developed different criteria to explain how characters obtain a cultural afterlife:

...if you think of these books, you do at once think of some character who has seemed to you so real (I do not by that mean so lifelike) that it has the power to make you think not merely of it itself, but of all sorts of things through its eyes—of religion, of love, of war, of peace, of family life, of balls in country towns, of sunsets, of moonrises the immortality of the soul.⁴¹²

Characters are granted “life eternal,” as Forster terms it, not because the reader remembers their “lifelike” or referential qualities, but in their capacity to transform how the reader experiences institutions, relationships, spirituality, and physical beauty. Not solely an end in itself, character is also a conduit for redirecting attention to the experience of some other cultural or natural phenomenon. Thus, in her analysis, understanding mental processes is inseparable from influencing what Lukács calls the “area where human behavior is moulded and evaluated.”

In *Proust was a Neuroscientist*, Jonah Lehrer characterizes Woolf’s modernist

⁴¹¹ Ibid. (56)

⁴¹² Virginia Woolf. “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Bennett.” *Critical Essays*. (11)

fiction as “neither a continuous transcription of the character’s self-consciousness (as in Joyce’s *Ulysses*) nor an objective description of events and perceptions (as in a typical nineteenth-century novel)” but an amalgamation of the two modes.⁴¹³ He claims that she produces a vivid account of the objective world by showing how that objective world is experienced and internalized: “the impersonal sensation is always ripening into a subjective experience, and that experience is always flowing into the next one. And yet, from this incessant change, the character emerges.”⁴¹⁴ Although Lehrer excludes Woolf’s more traditional fiction, I argue that *Night and Day* productively melds objective narrative methodologies with newer experiments with consciousness productively. The novel toggles between a realist image of a character at work and then a transcription of the character’s visionary moments; it finds Woolf trying to balance the demands of character-in-itself and character-through-its-eyes. To be sure, the techniques Woolf develops are from some points of view not entirely successful; as I will note in particular, Woolf struggles with the problems that Mary’s physical actions in the workplace are static in comparison to her incredibly rich mental life and that what the reader sees through Katharine and Denham’s eyes is an unreflective presentation of self at work. Nonetheless, I argue that the novel marks a crucial step in the consolidation of Woolf’s style, and that even its partial failures are useful in understanding character.

Katherine Hilbery, Ralph Denham, Mary Datchet, and other characters in *Night and Day* are not granted eternity; in fact, they can barely even “be trusted to behave appropriately” as Forster describes it. A common complaint about the text is that the

⁴¹³ Jonah Lehrer. *Proust was a Neuroscientist*. During his tenure as a writer for the *New Yorker*, Lehrer has been discredited for self-plagiarism and for wrongful attribution of quotes in an article on Bob Dylan. While this is worth noting, it does not seem to impact his work on modernists and neuroscientists.

⁴¹⁴ Jonah Lehrer. *Proust was a Neuroscientist*. (274)

characters are flat—a position perhaps best articulated in Katharine Mansfield's lament that "we have the queer sensation that once the author's pen is removed from [the minor characters], they have neither speech nor motion, and are not to be revived again until she adds another stroke or two or writes another sentence underneath."⁴¹⁵ While we can easily grant that *Night and Day* does not offer the most memorable characters, we can nonetheless try to locate when Woolf attempts to imbue a character with "the power to make you think not merely of it itself, but of all sorts of things through its eyes." Take, for example, the narrative intensity available in Woolf's introduction of suffragette Mary, who darns her stockings before hosting a lecture on in her apartments. The passage is particularly rich and emblematic of the style of *Night and Day*, so I will quote it at length:

...her mind, reflecting the lassitude of her body, went on perversely, conjuring up visions of solitude and quiet, and she pictured herself laying aside her knitting and walking out on to the down, and hearing nothing but the sheep cropping the grass close to the roots, while the shadows of the little trees moved very slightly this way and that in the moonlight, as the breeze went through them. But she was perfectly conscious of her present situation, and derived some pleasure from the reflection that she could rejoice equally in solitude, and in the presence of the many very different people who were now making their way, by divers paths, across London to the spot where she was sitting. As she ran her needle in and out of the wool, she thought of the various stages in her own life which made her present position seem the culmination of successive miracles. She thought of her clerical father in his country parsonage, and of her mother's death, and of her own determination to obtain education, and of her college life, which had merged, not so very long ago, in the wonderful maze of London, which still seemed to her, in spite of her constitutional level-headedness, like a vast electric light, casting radiance upon the myriads of men and women who crowded round it. And here she was at the very center of it all, that center which was constantly in the minds of people in remote Canadian forests and on the plains of India, when their thoughts turned to England⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁵ Katherine Mansfield. "A Ship Comes into the Harbour." *The Athenaeum*. (109)

⁴¹⁶ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (62) One of the difficulties about the novel is that it is difficult to excerpt components of various passage because the overall structure would be lost, as would the particular contours of the narration.

The narration circles, transposing again and again the image of Mary's tactile manipulation of fabric and needle with a vivid account of the character's memories, anticipations, and imaginings. Mary simultaneously casts a glance forward and backward in time, while remaining "perfectly conscious of her present situation." The visual bricolage shifts between the particular achievements of her life and everyday experiences, like regarding the shadows of trees in the countryside or the various London pathways that lead to her door. Rather than studying the character in itself, the reader is indeed invited to see through Mary's eyes glimpses of religion, peace, family life, country towns, and, if not exactly a "moonrise," then at least moonlight.

The character grasps at a number of different sensations and tableaux, but it is not always clear what Woolf most wants us to see through Mary's eyes: is it the needlework or the desire to set aside the needlework, is it Mary's personal history or her relative insignificance within "the wonderful maze of London"? The passage establishes Mary's biography, aspirations, and temperament with skillful economy, while also introducing the contradictory thematics that thread through the novel. This is to say that the narrator no sooner depicts Mary discharging a quotidian task before the narrator presents her "picture[ing] herself laying aside her knitting and walking out on to the down." Further, as her fingers work, she imagines the "culmination of successive miracles" needed to pursue her ambitions in London, while simultaneously acknowledging that her hard-won independence is diluted in the anonymity of the vast public spaces of London. The move from the country to the city strips her of her identity, but the loss of that identity is not mourned. Instead, there is a layered and textured conceit about how London as a social imaginary works: Mary's personal ambitions may be ignited and then dimmed by the

city, but she takes solace in being able to imagine herself in the place of which colonial expatriates dream.

Identity and its loss, work and its end, mobility and ambivalence about mobility are, then, the heart of theoretical questions available in the text. These questions, moreover, emerge in and through the realist depiction of a character who is daydreaming while busily tinkering with a minor task. As this conceit is reiterated a few times throughout the novel, I want to suggest that if Woolf tries to fashion a character who “has the power to make you think not merely of it itself, but of all sorts of things through its eyes,” this means seeing the habitual processes of tasks, chores, office work, and other labors. I further claim that Woolf does not strike the right balance between character-in-itself and character-through-its-eyes because she struggles to depict characters’ mental lives at work. Moreover, Woolf explores the ways that working at home destabilizes how labor is recognized and realized—a schema that is further complicated by the major-minor character Mary Datchett. Mary has a complex function in the plot: she is a potential friend and later rival to Katharine, the presumptive match and then matchmaker for Ralph, a woman with a profession but no paycheck, as well as an exemplum or a cautionary tale for single women.

Determining Mary’s significance proves to be one of the more interpretatively rich tasks we can take up vis-à-vis *Night and Day*. Still uncoupled at the novel’s conclusion, Mary follows a trajectory different from that of the quartet of lovers, leaving critics divided about whether she is meant to underscore the inherent limitations of female agency or offer a hopeful vision for it. The first camp suggests that Mary’s career ambitions are merely compensatory for her inability to secure a match with Denham. An

anonymous reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1919 claims that Mary, “missing what she most wanted in life, works out for herself something that is as true, though no nearly so exciting as the adventure of Katharine and Ralph.”⁴¹⁷ David Trotter shifts the focus to Katharine, arguing that Mary serves “to embody an unromantic independence, which the heroine admires but does not in the end want for herself.”⁴¹⁸ Megan Quigley goes so far as to call the conclusion “bleak” because “Katharine and Mary Datchet, characters who figure in many ways as twins are exiled from each other at the book’s end; Woolf’s moral may be that love and work are mutually exclusive.”⁴¹⁹ Conversely, those eager to recuperate Mary’s career ambitions suggest that, if love and work cannot be synthesized, then she has discovered the more fulfilling path. Concurring with Quigley that Woolf encounters an “imaginative constraint” in trying to negotiate “the historical difficulty women have had combining marriage with nondomestic work,” Susan Merrill Squier argues that it is Mary who accesses a “utopia” that is structurally impossible for Katharine and Cassandra.⁴²⁰ Contending that those historical limitations were changing and that “truth found through work is offered as a new experience open to young women,” Julie Briggs writes that Mary “embodies the ideal that [the lovers] would both have liked for themselves, and as if Mary, through her suffrage work, was vicariously accomplishing that desire for them.”⁴²¹ Sowon S. Park claims that “Mary offers Katharine a glimpse of what she might hold if she succeeds in breaking free from the groaning inheritance of her grand literary predecessors and the major reference-points

⁴¹⁷ Anonymous Review. *The Literary Supplement* (607)

⁴¹⁸ David Trotter. *The English Novel in History*. (84)

⁴¹⁹ Megan M. Quigley. “Modern Novels and Vagueness.” *Modernism/modernity*. (103)

⁴²⁰ Susan Merrill Squier. “Tradition and Revision: The Classic City Novel and Virginia Woolf’s *Night and Day*.” *Women Writers and the City: Essays in Feminist Literary Criticism*, ed. Susan Merrill (136)

⁴²¹ Julia Briggs, ed. *Virginia Woolf: Introductions to the Major Works* (49)

by which social life is ordered for women in her social location.”⁴²²

Whether critics are dissatisfied that the ambitious female character is denied romantic love or optimistic because that same denial offers a pathway towards greater female autonomy, their interpretative frameworks share an uncritical analysis of Mary’s working life. Positioning the two major female characters in relation to one another, critics synopsise the novel in the following terms: despite an initial plan to work, Katharine likely shelves a future in mathematics for her impending marriage, while Mary discovers solace in work when her hopes for marriage are dashed. What goes unremarked in the comparisons of the two characters is that, at the start of the novel, Katharine is paid for her domestic labor, while Mary performs clerical duties without receiving compensation. Acting as hostess to literary tourists who admire her grandfather’s Victorian poetry, Katharine receives a yearly stipend to preserve her grandfather’s home and legacy, but her labor largely goes unacknowledged. Meanwhile, characters and critics alike recognize Mary as working woman, but Woolf explicitly notes that she merely looks the part:

She was some twenty-five years of age, but looked older because she earned, or intended to earn, her own living, and had already lost the look of the irresponsible spectator, and taken on that of the private in the army of workers. Her gestures seemed to have a certain purpose, the muscles round eyes and lips were set rather firmly, as though the senses had undergone some discipline, and were held ready for a call on them. She had contracted two faint lines between her eyebrows, not from anxiety but from thought, and it was quite evident that all the feminine instincts of pleasing, soothing, and charming were crossed by others in no way peculiar to her sex.⁴²³

Working as an office manager in a converted Georgian townhouse in Russell Square,

⁴²² Sowon S Park. “Suffrage and Virginia Woolf: ‘The Mass behind the Single Voice.’” *The Review of English Studies*. (127)

⁴²³ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (39-40)

Mary no longer resembles a member of the leisure class. Her movements are purposeful, her expression is stern, her frown lines suggest seriousness, and she seems not to need to placate the opposite sex. But if these realist details, which indicate that her body has been shaped by the experience of working, the narrator adds the early caveat that she looks like this because “she earned, or intended to earn, her own living.” The comment slyly suggests an equivalence between paid compensation and the intention to be paid one day, but, in point of fact, Mary is still a “spectator” and not truly a member “in the army of workers.” If Katharine is paid and Mary is not, then their stories may suggest that Woolf is interested in what counts as work and how it is determined: is work determined by effort, alienation, payment, recognition, professional status, or affect?

Mary experiences her identity as plastic because of the categorization of her work, rather than because of consumer fantasies. As mentioned in the introduction, Woolf provides in *Night and Day* a more realist account of the consumer experience that Moretti historicizes. Moretti claims that navigating European cosmopolises with their surfeit of commodities proves to be overwhelming to the senses and that individuals became passively receptive to the fantasies of power and endless possibilities available on display. However, the difficulty Mary experiences in understanding the city, as well as her place in it, comes from the entanglement of work and leisure. During her commute, for example, she notices how “the goods were being arranged, and empty gaps behind the plate glass revealed a state of undress,” which leads her to hope that the owners “would trick the midday public into purchasing, for at this hour of the morning she ranged herself entirely on the side of the shopkeepers and bank clerks, and regarded all who slept late

and had money to spend as her enemy and natural prey.”⁴²⁴ Not only does Mary distinguish herself from conspicuous consumers, she also is attuned to the effort concealed behind the window displays, how they are designed to manipulate.⁴²⁵ As she continues to walk, “her thoughts all came naturally and regularly to roost upon her work, and she forgot that she was, properly speaking, an amateur worker, whose services were unpaid, and could hardly be said to wind the world up for its daily task.”⁴²⁶ Woolf indicates that Mary identifies with the bank clerks and shopkeepers because she wants to think of herself as a professional, rather than a dilettante. Without receiving a wage for her efforts, her “amateur” office work is technically how she spends her leisure time. In other words, she may have an excess of leisure time, but she does not wish to experience it as such.

Her commute may expose her to the lures of consumption, but Mary can discern how consumer desires are manufactured, as well as how her professional ambitions are at odds with those desires. Mary indeed restrains her shopping impulses:

She was thinking all the way up Southampton Row of notepaper and foolscap, and how an economy in the use of paper might be effected (without, of course, hurting Mrs. Seal's feelings), for she was certain that the great organizers always pounce, to begin with, upon trifles like these, and build up their triumphant reforms upon a basis of absolute solidity;

⁴²⁴ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (51-52)

⁴²⁵ Echoes of Mary's commuting experience can be found in Clarissa Dalloway's errand to buy flowers for her dinner party. Clarissa Dalloway is perhaps the conspicuous consumer *par excellence* but, when she walks through Westminster on her errand, she also distinguishes herself from a group of other consumers, who are the prey of merchants: “...and the shopkeepers were fidgeting in their windows with their paste and diamonds, their lovely old sea-green brooches in eighteenth-century settings to tempt Americans (but one must economise, not buy things rashly for Elizabeth)...” Clarissa can penetrate the techniques used to manufacture consumer desire because she recognizes that the shopkeepers are at work in the window displays; however, she distances herself from a different kind of conspicuous consumption, namely that of American tourists. There is also a resonance to Woolf's own diary entry in 1917, when she describes the devastation after an explosion hit London: “We saw the hole in Piccadilly this afternoon....Swan & Edgar has every window covered with sacking or planks; you see show women looking out from behind: ‘business goes on as usual’ so they say.” (Virginia Woolf, *A Moment's Liberty: The Shorter Diary*, entry date 10/22/17)

⁴²⁶ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (51-52)

and, without acknowledging it for a moment, Mary Datchet was determined to be a great organizer, and had already doomed her society to reconstruction of the most radical kind.⁴²⁷

As Moretti suggests, walking through the city generates image after image of commodities (“she was thinking all the way up Southampton Row of notepaper and foolscap”); Mary, however, does not pull these images from the shops or advertisements themselves. The mental process is more nuanced: the sight of shops leads her to imagine an easily manipulated leisure class; she mitigates her own consumer desires by substituting a different shopping experience (the errand, rather than the spree); and, ultimately, she resists even that impulse. Mary assumes that her reformist aspirations are tethered to her ability to limit consumption because economizing is “the absolute basis of solidity.” Her ambitions are structured around a socially codified perception that resisting consumption is part of professionalism.

Mary’s negotiation of the retail landscape exemplifies Woolf’s exploration, in *Night and Day*, of how characters internalize the demands of work. But the novel also indicates that assessing behavior is even more important than inventory control. Mary may think that she will prove her mettle as a reformer through economizing, but her first major contribution to the suffragette cause is to launch a benefit by using her typewriter, the “cumbrous machine to pick out this, that, and the other interesting person from the muddle of the world, and to set them for a week in a pattern which must catch the eyes of Cabinet Ministers, and the eyes once caught, the old arguments were to be delivered with unexampled originality.”⁴²⁸ She will not need to economize on “foolscap or note-paper” but to select individuals “from the muddle of the world” in order to sway those

⁴²⁷ Ibid. (52)

⁴²⁸ Ibid. (52-53)

government officials to the cause.

Not only does Woolf suggest that kindling consumer desires can pose a greater challenge than containing them, but she also suggests that Mary's inner life is richest at work, not in leisure. "When her brain had been heated by three hours of application," Mary feels that she is "the center ganglion of a very fine network of nerves which fell over England, and one of these days, when she touched the heart of the system, would begin feeling and rushing together and emitting their splendid blaze of revolutionary fireworks."⁴²⁹ By that same afternoon, though, "Mary [finds] herself watching the flight of a bird, or making drawings of the branches of the plane-trees upon her blotting-paper."⁴³⁰ Woolf indicates that Mary's efforts to overcome "the great difficulty in reducing her mind to obedience" is fascinating, even as she acknowledges that that process can be unnarratable because Mary discovers that her interest returns "without conscious effort, by some trick of the brain."⁴³¹ Surveilling Mary at work does not yield information about how to motivate her to work more efficiently or with more dedication. Although Woolf exposes the constraints of managerial observation here, she begins to theorize how it can also be the basis for connection, as we will see in the next section.

"The Managed Heart"

Towards the end of *Night and Day*, Mrs. Hilbery catches her daughter reading a love note and asks about its contents, but Katharine dismissively calls it "a lot of nonsense." Mrs. Hilbery forecasts that, in a decade, it will not seem like nonsense and

⁴²⁹ Ibid. (68-69)

⁴³⁰ Ibid. (72)

⁴³¹ Ibid.(146-7)

suggests that "...you'll look back on these days afterwards; you'll remember all the silly things you've said; and you'll find that your life has been built on them. The best of life is built on what we say when we're in love. It isn't nonsense, Katharine...it's the truth, it's the only truth."⁴³² The last line could have been written by E. M. Forster, whose characters say aloud the kind of rapturous pronouncements that Woolf's more iconic characters will only think.⁴³³ Within Mrs. Hilbery's prediction that the lovers' talk will become more profound with the passage of time, there is a second prophecy: her pronouncement anticipates the pleasures afforded by a retrospective account of young love, such as is found in Woolf's more innovative and canonical text *Mrs. Dalloway*.

In many ways, Woolf's fourth novel shares much of the same genetic material as her second. On a literal level, they share the character of Mrs. Hilbery: she is a spirited matron who secures the marriage between Denham and Katharine in *Night and Day*, though by *Mrs. Dalloway*, she has aged considerably and, according to Joan Bennett, her presence at the final party is meant to serve as a reminder of the inescapability of mortality.⁴³⁴ Beyond sharing this same character, the two novels are similarly constituted: during the course of a day in June, Clarissa Dalloway reminisces about a nascent female friendship and her decision, so similar to Katharine's, to choose a more ambitious suitor over a cultured man with whom she has had a longer acquaintance. Throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa finds herself arrested by the "nonsense" that was

⁴³² Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (389)

⁴³³ Mrs. Ramsay in *TiL*: "She had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough!"; or Clarissa Dalloway in *MD*: "After that, how unbelievable death was!-that it must end; and no one in the whole world would know how she had loved it all..." -*MD*.

⁴³⁴ Joan Bennett. "Characters and Human Beings." *Critical Essays on Virginia Woolf*. (128)

said during her youth, proving that it can make up “the best of life,” as Mrs. Hilbery suggests. If *Night and Day* has been consigned to the footnotes of biographies while *Mrs. Dalloway* has become a canonical text of high modernism, however, this may in part be because the central love story in the earlier text is not convincing or fully resolved. It has invited a curious form of speculation in which critics try to determine whether the match will be successful or not.

Woolf's biography has been mined for clues about the longevity of the Denham-Hilbery union. If the novel is a gentle rebuke to Leonard Woolf's criticisms of early married life made in *The Wise Virgins*, then the ending can be seen as hopeful. If Katharine is modeled after Vanessa Bell for more than her blue dress and her ambitions, then perhaps the marriage will be a prelude to a series of extramarital conquests. Viewed from the vantage of Woolf's more mature writing and sexually fluid experience, some have argued that the heteronormative courtship is loveless and that the only erotic charge in the text is to be found in Katharine and Mary's brief handholding. Drawing on the bleakness of Woolf's first novel, Susan J. Leonardi claims that “... the reader projects into their marriage Katharine's constant struggle not to be possessed, not to be dominated; her frequent passivity suggests that the effort will not succeed.”⁴³⁵ Megan Quigley argues that, while the bulk of the novel may follow a plodding Victorian novel structure, the final scene favors “the vision of vagueness that Katherine and Ralph share at the end of *Night and Day*.”⁴³⁶ Josephine O'Brien Schaefer writes that, “If it is true that the course of true love never did run smooth, the course of Katharine and Ralph's love

⁴³⁵ Susan J. Leonardi, “Bare Places and Ancient Blemishes: Virginia Woolf's Search for New Language in *Day and Night*,” *Novel*. (160)

⁴³⁶ Megan M. Quigley, “Modern Novels and Vagueness,” *Modernism/modernity*. (103)

for large stretches of the novel seems barely to run at all.”⁴³⁷ For the conclusion of a marriage plot, Katharine and Ralph’s union is unusually unstable, which allows us to question why Woolf unites the two characters. Woolf may suggest that a managerial observation may be limiting; however, that habit of attention allows Denham to perceive that Katharine is working even if it initially seems like she is at leisure.

In the first scene of the novel, Katharine, like many other women of her class, offers tea to her guests. And through strategic repetition, this unremarkable image, the first of the novel, evolves into a meditation on work and its assessment. The narrator observes a character performing a task and, in doing so, draws attention to the limitations of that form of observation. The woman’s assured movements, the reader learns, belie the truth of her degree of engagement because “perhaps a fifth part of her mind was thus occupied.”⁴³⁸ Intimating that her daydreaming might merit more attention than her automatic behavior, the narrator isolates one of her thoughts only to be returned to those habitual actions. Katharine mentally pictures how she looks offering tea to her guests, deciding that a passerby would assume that they “were enjoying themselves; he would think, ‘What an extremely nice house to come into!’”⁴³⁹ A stranger might focus on the typicality of her actions and overlook the particularity of her circumstances: Katharine Hilbery, unlike so many women of her class, is a custodian of her grandfather’s literary legacy and, therefore, is financially compensated for the tea party. Concerned that the tableau would conceal the labor undergirding it, Katharine laughs “for the credit of the house presumably, since she herself had not been feeling exhilarated,” which ironically

⁴³⁷ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (123)

⁴³⁸ Ibid (5)

⁴³⁹ Ibid. (5)

amplifies the appearance of leisure and further masks her resistance to the compulsory task.⁴⁴⁰

The peculiarity of the scene can be attributed to a certain replication of narration, where Katharine's insight competes with the narrator by doubling the original image of her serving tea. As if to exaggerate the image's import further, her visualization is then literalized when Denham enters the room and stands in a position to evaluate whether the hostess is at work or at play. Initially confirming her fears, Denham sees "a room full of people much at their ease, and all launched upon sentences" before he becomes more absorbed by his own subjective experience, feeling "as if a thousand softly padded doors had closed between him and the street outside" and that "a fine mist, the etherealized essence of the fog" fills the room.⁴⁴¹ This third manipulation of the tea-serving image distorts the setting to capture the mood of Denham; the alterations to the scene reinforce a cloistered and leisurely interpretation of the gathering. Once Denham acclimates to his surroundings, though, he begins to perceive Katharine's affective labor. He softens when he realizes that serving tea to enthusiasts of her grandfather's poetry is "not without its difficulties" and that "it must be a bore" to take guests on guided tours of her house.⁴⁴² His insight into her work can be limited: he assumes that she worries about the "duty of filling someone else's cup," when she is actually preoccupied with the more delicate affective labor of integrating him into the group dynamic.⁴⁴³ That said, Denham notices,

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. (5)

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. (6)

⁴⁴² Ibid. (11)

⁴⁴³ Ibid. (7)

as the narrator does, that Katharine attends to her hostess duties “only with the surface skin of her mind.”⁴⁴⁴

There may seem to be a narrative wastefulness in dipping into the minds of two characters only to offer a similar insight about Katharine already established by the narrator. Refusing to shift narrative attention to more dynamic interactions, Woolf keeps circling back to the image of Katharine at work in a way that partly mimics the monitoring of an employee’s productivity. But it is precisely through this wasted or extraneous effort that Woolf suggests how assessing work performance can be a limited and limiting form of observation. The three variations on the same scene, for example, do not generate much information about the character. Each time, the reader’s objective is static: look at Katharine only in order to determine if she is competently discharging her duties or to note signs of disinterest in that work. This readerly activity yields some information about the tension between her private desires and what she is compelled to do, but the precise contours of her negotiation of that conflict remain opaque.

Woolf similarly suggests that Katharine’s awareness of her work performance is a narrow and unsatisfying form of self-knowledge, unlike the more ethically complex terrain of self-doubt, self-deception or self-disclosure that reveal more of the character’s inner life. Katharine is keenly conscious of herself, when she imagines her emotional labor (she suppresses resentment to appear as if she enjoys passing out dishes of tea) and her affective labor (she attempts to produce an environment of conviviality for her visitors). That heightened awareness, however, does not translate into a more profound knowledge: she sees her body, its movements, and her inability to make her labor visible,

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. (8)

but not her experience of that observation. Katharine seems unable to bear thinking about this structural passivity too carefully, and her immediate recoil itself oddly undermines the surety of the narration (“*instinctively* she laughed, and said something to increase the noise, for the credit of the house *presumably*”). Katharine’s skill in producing a suite of emotional responses, combined with the narrative attention focused on appraising that skill, produces an imperfect form of narrative insight. Information about her appearance is conveyed, but the character’s inner life remains in key ways concealed from the reader.⁴⁴⁵

One sophisticated feature of Woolf’s writing is that, once she locates a potential source of inaccessibility, she may go on to reclaim that space as the grounds for connection. Michael Rosenthal writes that “the fact of isolation and the possibility of fleeting transcendence and communion—these are the two poles of Woolf’s fictional universe. Rooted in one, characters can earn, through their own arduous efforts, brief contact with the other.”⁴⁴⁶ While the act of evaluating productivity is marked as limited and limiting, that same habit of attention also allows Denham to perceive Katharine’s concealed labor, which serves as the basis for their eventual understanding. Over the course of the novel, it is revealed that Katharine and Denham each desire to be released from their occupations in order to pursue more fulfilling work. But Woolf does not create anything so facile as the instant recognition of a semblable: granting that the

⁴⁴⁵ The only exception is the glimpse provided by the narrator of how “the remaining parts [of Katharine’s mind] leapt over the little barrier of day which interposed between Monday morning and this rather subdued moment, and played with the things one does voluntarily and normally in the daylight.” Woolf, Virginia. *Night and Day* (5) The stream of consciousness technique allows for more attention to be placed on the images and ideas that distract Katharine rather than on establishing how she looks while being distracted.

⁴⁴⁶ Michael Rosenthal. “The Problem of Fiction.” *Critical Essays on Virginia Woolf*. ed. Morris Beja (194)

recognition of another's effort can be the grounds for empathy, Woolf indicates that this form of fellow-feeling is not easily extended to women. Willing to interrogate subtle gender inequities, Woolf intimates that the moments of connection between the two characters are undercut by flashes of enmity whenever Denham forgets that Katharine labors. And Denham can forget this, Woolf implies, because Katharine performs her tasks at home and because her labor classification is complicated.

The romance seems to begin when Katharine responds to Denham's uncommunicated recognition that she does not enjoy her work. Jennifer Wicke writes that "consciousness is telekinetic (to use J. Hillis Miller's delightful term for Woolfian narrativity) and telepathic, not necessarily in any mystical way, but in a socio-material unfolding of a wide social net within which consciousness buzzes and blooms."⁴⁴⁷ These telekinetic and telepathic forms of consciousness are available in *Night and Day*, but Woolf does not yet possess the stylistic grammar to foreground them. The dynamic between Katharine and Denham is so slight that the precise contours are often overlooked. Without speaking or even modulating his facial expression, Denham silently "checked his inclination to find her, or her attitude, generally antipathetic to him."⁴⁴⁸ Katharine inexplicably senses his mood, ceases to view him as one of the resentful young men who write for her father's review, and gradually relaxes enough to stop performing emotional and affective labor for him. But in order to watch this dynamic unfold, the reader is again required to observe Katharine working in a capable but distracted manner. When Katharine ushers Denham through her grandfather's study, she recites a script of

⁴⁴⁷ Jennifer Wicke. "Mrs. Dalloway Goes to Market: Woolf, Keynes, and Modern Markets." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* (3)

⁴⁴⁸ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day* (8)

anecdotes and arcana: “she paused for a minute, and then went on, as if these spaces had all been calculated” but continues “without considering the fact that Mr. Denham was still occupied with the manuscript.”⁴⁴⁹ Eventually, Katharine allows even that last fifth of her mind to drift off, as she does not in her tea duties, and falls “for the thousandth time into a pleasant dreamy state in which she seemed to be the companion of those giant men, of their own lineage, at any rate, and the insignificant present moment was put to shame.”⁴⁵⁰ Although daydreaming about her ancestors is a regular occurrence (it is “the thousandth time”), it is uncharacteristic for Katharine to indulge in the practice in the presence of visitors.⁴⁵¹

Pausing before her grandfather’s portrait with Denham is significant, given that the love story explores how Denham permits Katharine to access something akin to what Woolf describes in *Mrs. Dalloway* as “the privacy of the soul.” Katharine’s willingness to indulge in her reverie, rather than conceal it, is a foretaste of the freedom she feels by the end of the novel. Three seasons after their first meeting, Katharine explains that she is attracted to Denham because she can mull over math problems in his presence: “It’s an hallucination, pure and simple—an intoxication.... One can be in love with pure reason?...Because if you’re in love with a vision, I believe that that’s what I’m in love with.”⁴⁵² I argue that Woolf creates a baffling love story, where the characters express passion but not necessarily desire, in order to explore a contradictory and compelling dynamic available in their first meeting. Denham softens towards Katharine, when he

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. (8)

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. (10)

⁴⁵¹ We know that Katharine does not allow herself to lapse into distraction in a later scene, when she gives a tour to an American visitor. She does relax and contemplate the image of her grandfather’s portrait, but only when she is alone.

⁴⁵² Ibid. (369)

recognizes that her domestic chores are work, and she relaxes enough to stop performing that work for him. The moment, Woolf suggests, is genuinely intimate, though it is an intimacy that must perforce create distance.

This admixture of closeness and privacy lingers over the love story, complicating it: Denham's resolve not to antagonize Katharine, for example, falters, when she feels free enough to express disinterest in her duties openly. If the couple reaches an implicit understanding when he silently acknowledges her work, that spell is broken when she ceases to perform emotional labor and he can no longer perceive her effort. Denham watches Katharine in her grandfather's chair absent-mindedly running her hands over his cane, sitting against a background of "lustrous blue-and-white paint, and crimson books with gilt lines on them" where "the vitality and composure of her attitude, as of a bright-plumed bird poised easily before further flights, roused him to show her the limitations of her lot."⁴⁵³ The terminology of "composure" intimates aesthetic experience but it also foregrounds the concept of leisure. The domestic furnishings, though exquisite, serve to remind him that Katharine is not at work but in the comfort of her family home. Irritated by the semi-public display of her privacy, Denham retaliates by implying that her responsibilities, while time-consuming, are not meaningful, self-directed, or truly work at all.

Katharine listens to him identify and belittle her obligations, "as if between them they were decorating a small figure of herself, and she saw him hesitating in the disposition of some bow or sash."⁴⁵⁴ The figure of her imagination is clearly connected to her earlier visualization of her hostess duties: in both cases, she is estranged from

⁴⁵³ Ibid. (14)

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. (15)

herself because of a worry that her compulsory work will be interpreted as decorative. Yet, without dwelling on the image, Katharine subtly interrogates Denham's assumptions. When he asks her if she does anything herself, she replies: "I don't leave the house at ten and come back at six."⁴⁵⁵ The wry comment suggests both that the working day is an insufficient standard for assessing what counts as work *and* that Katharine might prefer time-delimited labor performed outside the home.

Denham and Katharine part without reconciling their different views on what constitutes work, but Woolf continues to draw connections between her financially compensated domestic labor and his more classic wage labor. Neither character, we might notice, is restricted to working between the hours of ten and six. The first chapter is devoted to Katharine's niche form of affective labor, done in her home on a chilly October evening; the second chapter registers Denham's uncompensated legal work done later that night in his own house. The scene introduces the reader to a contradiction in work assessment, where daydreaming is both instrumental and a hindrance to productivity. His visit to the Hilberys is meant to reinforce his long-term strategy to improve his material conditions because "he had always made plans since he was a small boy; for poverty, and the fact that he was the eldest son of a large family, had given him the habit of thinking of spring and summer, autumn, and winter, as so many stages in a prolonged campaign."⁴⁵⁶ Undertaking a "campaign" in boyhood to pursue an abstract desire for material improvement for his family leads Denham to allocate his leisure time to work. These measures for self-improvement grant him entrée into the salons of his

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. (15)

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. (22) Fussell's claim that military metaphor seeps into the fiction of the Great War era can be useful here. Note too the sense of time passing.

social betters and he observes firsthand the world he wants to inhabit. Once the visit ends, though, he returns to his modest and crowded suburban home, where he must begin another stage in the “prolonged campaign,” only to discover that he no longer is motivated to do so.

The visit to the Hilberys was meant to incentivize him to do uncompensated work by giving him a concrete vision of the luxuries he will be able to provide for his family; it instead slows his ambitions and alienates him from that family: “the life of the Hilberys was getting the better of the life of the Denhams in his mind.”⁴⁵⁷ Sequestering himself in his room, Denham retrieves a law book, but cannot focus on its contents or even on the abstract desire of upward mobility: the whole thickness of some learned counsel’s treatise upon Torts did not screen him satisfactorily. Through the pages he saw a drawing-room, very empty and spacious....⁴⁵⁸ The idea that touring the home of his social betters would inspire Denham to be more productive is consistent with classical economic theory that encourages similar exercises of the imagination at work. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith contends that the best innovations are developed by workmen who devise efficiencies in order to spend more time at leisure. Illustrating the point, he describes a young boy “who loved to play with his companions” and designed a time-saving device because it would “leave him at liberty to divert himself with his play-fellows.”⁴⁵⁹ Smith’s story implicitly authorizes daydreaming at work because the little boy must be capable of “looking through” the rote task of opening a flue in order to envision the games he can play with friends. But looking “through the pages” of a law book, Denham

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. (26)

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. (22)

⁴⁵⁹ Adam Smith. *The Wealth of Nations*. (10)

is unable to protect himself from the lures of leisure. The weight and materiality of the book cannot “screen him satisfactorily.”

On the contrary: staring through its pages, Denham imagines the Hilbery drawing room:

...he heard low voices, he saw women's figures, he could even smell the scent of the cedar log which flamed in the grate. His mind relaxed its tension, and seemed to be giving out now what it had taken in unconsciously at the time. He could remember Mr. Fortescue's exact words, and the rolling emphasis with which he delivered them, and he began to repeat what Mr. Fortescue had said, in Mr. Fortescue's own manner, about Manchester.⁴⁶⁰

Holding the book on his lap, Denham relaxes and unconsciously mimics the mannerisms of a visitor to the house. And there is a second, implied mimicry in the scene: like Katharine, Denham daydreams while working at home. Katharine's competition with the narrator manifests as a tripling of the image of herself at work, while Denham competes by granting himself omniscience to rove over Katharine's household: “His mind then began to wander about the house, and he wondered whether there were other rooms like the drawing-room ...”⁴⁶¹ Denham initially savors the sensations that he “had taken in unconsciously at the time,” but, as he relaxes further, he imagines rooms never visited and recreations never witnessed. Embellishing his memories, Denham relaxes completely: “How peaceful and spacious it was; and the peace possessed him so completely that his muscles slackened, his book drooped from his hand, and he forgot that the hour of work was wasting minute by minute.”⁴⁶² Woolf trains the reader to notice how Denham's inattention registers physically (muscles slacken, the book droops,

⁴⁶⁰ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (22) Several critics have argued that Mr. Fortescue is modeled after Henry James

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. (22)

⁴⁶² Ibid. (22)

he imitates Mr. Fortescue). The free indirect discourse, moreover, indexes the character's consciousness (the phrase "the hour of work was wasting minute by minute" seems typical of Denham's phrasing) by way of an absence of those thoughts. His mental life is thus described in two registers—a habitual thought pattern of self-assessment, structured by the homogenized time of work, and contentment when that self-monitoring is abandoned.

If Katharine's visualization of her performance of work is an empty form of self-knowledge, Denham's reflexive self-assessment is similarly insufficient. During his fantasizing, Denham "was roused by a creak upon the stair. With a guilty start he composed himself, frowned and looked intently at the fifty-sixth page of his volume."⁴⁶³ The sound triggers Denham to correct his behavior, but his "guilty start" also seems unnecessary, given that he is doing freelance work in the privacy of his home. Read in the context of later moments in the novel, the reflex suggests that Denham's presentation of self, even in absolute privacy, is correlated to his ability to rise in the law firm. Denham is possessed of "ostentatious efficiency" that draws the attention of superiors, as well as coworkers, "who took their own work more lightly, and, if they foretold his advancement, it was not altogether sympathetically."⁴⁶⁴ Denham is conditioned to a diffuse monitoring at work, which might explain why "he composed himself, frowned and looked intently at the fifty-sixth page of his volume" even though no one can see him behind the closed door. The knowledge of how to appear visibly engaged in a task is marked as socially and economically useful, as well as absurd when extended to private life. Woolf, moreover, implies that it would be difficult for an outside observer to

⁴⁶³ Ibid. (22)

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid. (112)

determine whether he is actually performing the task because the difference between “looking through” the book in a daydream and “staring intently” at the book is negligible.

If Denham is to increase his productivity, he requires both fantasies of happiness to keep him motivated and vigilance against those desires. During the guided tour of the Hilbery house, he balks at Katharine’s privilege and “almost savagely” points out that she will never know “the pleasure of buying things after saving up for them, or reading books for the first time, or making discoveries.”⁴⁶⁵ Woolf does not romanticize his defense of compulsory work or frugality but shows instead the fragility of those values. As outlined, Denham returns to the suburbs after his visit and sees his overcrowded house practically mold in front of his eyes—stains bloom on the walls, carpets become threadbare under his feet, and plaster crumbles off the walls. Unable to concentrate on his legal work, Denham fantasizes about the lifestyle to which he aspires until he hears his sister’s step on the stairs and composes himself with “a guilty start.” In the conversation with his sister, he explains that the shabbiness of their home is demoralizing and Joan encourages him to redecorate his room, which leads to a debate about the ends and means of working:

“What does it matter what sort of room I have when I’m forced to spend all the best years of my life drawing up deeds in an office?”

“You said two days ago that you found the law so interesting.”

“So it is if one could afford to know anything about it.”⁴⁶⁶

In contradiction to his pronouncement to Katharine, Denham can no longer envision life revolving around saving, reading, or making discoveries. Even if he draws the salary to buy the things he wants, Denham assumes that he will continue to want them because he

⁴⁶⁵Ibid. (12)

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid. (78)

will need to spend more time at the office. Joan then steers him into thinking of work as an end in itself because he finds his course of study “so interesting.”

The love story of Katharine and Denham incorporates two unpleasant dynamics: Katharine eventually agrees to marry him because she can ignore him and Denham’s infatuation is inseparable from coveting her lifestyle. As Bruce Robbins explains, there is already a thinly disguised, uncomfortable connection between marriage plots and the desire for upward mobility:

We know that social climbing seeks shelter in love stories, where it can hide its true colors. What better camouflage for the pursuit of social advantages than to make them seem the unintended result of pairing up with the boss or the boss’s daughter, hence as natural and innocent as falling in love? This is just a love story, isn’t it? Do we really have to look under the hood? On the other hand, who can keep from entertaining the mean-spirited hypothesis that the drive toward the final tender embrace is fueled by high-octane ambition?⁴⁶⁷

Denham does not intend to fall in love with the boss’s daughter—if the relationship between the freelance writer and his editor can be characterized in this way—yet this does not mean that his eventual marriage cannot also be read as one of his “many stages in a prolonged campaign” to enter a higher social stratum. For Robbins, the confluence of love and ambition has two effects: the reader cannot view the relationship as unalloyed with self-interest but the density of emotions keeps that self-interest from appearing like cold and rational calculation. Denham’s dreams of advancement coincide with a sudden infatuation that combines the love of an aesthetic experience with the love of a person, but in the process, his ambition is rendered less acute. That is to say, his infatuation may partake of a desire to possess Katharine’s quality of life because it allows him to forgo his ambitions rather than to redouble them. Unlike Robbins’ diagnostic, Woolf reveals that a

⁴⁶⁷ Bruce Robbins. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good* (67)

disenchantment with work, the other path for social climbing, is made to seem as “natural and innocent as falling in love” is. Some campaigns, she suggests, should be abandoned.⁴⁶⁸

Meeting Katharine profoundly alters Denham’s ambitions and, in subsequent scenes where the narrator regards him at work, his level of engagement becomes impenetrable. When Denham resumes studying that night, his reflexive timekeeping seems even more futile: “after a time he opened his book, and read on steadily, glancing once or twice at his watch, as if he had set himself a task to be accomplished in a certain measure of time.”⁴⁶⁹ The action is both repetitive and automatic, corresponding to an intention that he has not in fact set. Distracted by sounds of activity on the floors above him, Denham once more cannot focus on torts law. This time, he mentally scans his own home, which looks “as if the inmates had grazed down all luxuriance and plenty to the verge of decency....Katharine Hilbery, he thought, would condemn it off-hand.”⁴⁷⁰ If she engaged in the same imaginative exercise of surveying his lifestyle, she would find it lacking; and his mantras and professional habitus of “ostentatious efficiency” prove insufficient guards against that painful realization. The next time the narrator surveys him at work, his lack of motivation and purpose is conveyed in montage:

He thought that these winter days were spent in long hours before white papers radiant in electric light; and in short passages through fog-dimmed streets. When he came back to his work after lunch he carried in his head a picture of the Strand, scattered with omnibuses, and of the purple shapes of leaves pressed flat upon the gravel, as if his eyes had always been bent upon the ground. His brain worked incessantly, but his thought was

⁴⁶⁸ Woolf indicates that the desire to marry up is not “fueled by high octane ambition” but is structured by the equally compelling “drive” to be released from relentless ambition. That is to say, self-interest is more complicated than the rational calculation Robbins describe. When Karl Marx challenges classical economic theory, he does not contest Adam Smith’s assumption that men seek to protect their own self-interest, but instead argues that men do not fully understand what self-interest is.

⁴⁶⁹ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day*. (28)

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. (28)

attended with so little joy that he did not willingly recall it; but drove ahead, now in this direction, now in that...⁴⁷¹

The image of Denham seated beneath an “electric light” before “white papers” for “long hours,” with no memories beyond bus rides and fallen leaves, conveys the pathos of office life with economy. Denham’s thoughts, “attended with ... little joy,” resist narration and make it difficult to tell if he is working or not. Mary Datchet certainly cannot tell: she first likens him to a sleepwalker, before wondering aloud if he is absorbed in a legal case that involves “arranging some terrible love affair” or “reconcil[ing] a desperate couple.”⁴⁷² Denham admits that he is not thinking about the law at all.

To this point, distraction is more or less an object of theoretical interest, a puzzle to be solved. Woolf waits until the end of the novel to clarify the stakes of managerial observation. Denham, “no longer a model of concentration” by the close, works on a case “sufficiently confused to need all the care that a solicitor could bestow upon them, if the widow Leake and the five Leake children of tender age were to receive any pittance at all.”⁴⁷³ Woolf may exclusively study the minds of the middle class but she can be unsparing in that depiction: much has been written about Clarissa Dalloway’s callousness when she reads of the Armenian genocide, and Denham’s inaction is arguably even more unsympathetic, given his capacity to resolve the misfortune he encounters. His existential crisis about stalled upward mobility pales in comparison to the material loss experienced by the Leakes. Despite the severity of the case and its similarities to his own situation as the primary wage earner in a family of eight, “the appeal to Ralph’s humanity

⁴⁷¹ Ibid. (140) The image is reminiscent of the muted insight of J. Alfred Prufrock that “I have measured out my life in coffee spoons.”

⁴⁷² Ibid. (140)

⁴⁷³ Ibid.(422)

had little chance of being heard to-day” because “the partition so carefully erected between the different sections of his life had been broken down, with the result that though his eyes were fixed upon the last Will and Testament, he saw through the page a certain drawing-room in Cheyne Walk.”⁴⁷⁴ The inability to concentrate, the compulsion to imagine the Hilbery household, no longer seems as defensible when it entails a deafness to the “appeal to [his] humanity.”

Clarissa Dalloway tries to counterbalance her lack of empathy with the justification that “she loved her roses (didn't that help the Armenians?).”⁴⁷⁵ Denham defends his inability to concentrate on the Widow Leake by claiming that he is distracted by his passion for Katharine:

...a little to his alarm he found himself assailed so persistently, as if from outside, by Katharine, that he launched forth desperately into an imaginary interview with her. She obliterated a bookcase full of law reports, and the corners and lines of the room underwent a curious softening of outline like that which sometimes makes a room unfamiliar at the moment of waking from sleep.⁴⁷⁶

If his apathy is more morally problematic than Clarissa's, his defense (love of a person) seems more recognizable than hers (love of flowers). There is nevertheless a residual unpleasantness to his rationale of relieving himself of culpability. After engaging in an imaginary conversation with Katharine, Denham attempts to write poetry and philosophizes about communication, how it allows “each to have access to another world independent of personal affairs, a world of law, of philosophy, or more strangely...a

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.(422-23)

⁴⁷⁵ Virginia Woolf. *Mrs. Dalloway* (41)

⁴⁷⁶ Virginia Woolf. *Night and Day* (422) It strikes me that there is a resemblance between the “softening of outline” of the room in the conclusion of *Night and Day* and how Betty Flanders in the first lines of *Jacob's Room* sees how “the entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled,” when her eyes water.

vision flung out in advance of our actual circumstances.”⁴⁷⁷ From there, Denham contemplates the impossibility of knowing another person and how he feels isolated from Katharine. Unable to write any more, “he began to draw little figures in the blank spaces, heads meant to resemble her head, blots fringed with flames meant to represent—perhaps the entire universe.”⁴⁷⁸

Ignoring the legal affairs of the Leakes family in order to doodle seems morally suspect, but Woolf also seems to route the love story through this drawing. Later that night, Denham meets Katharine: when she sees the sketch of a dot with a flame around it, she unexpectedly connects with Denham and agrees that “the world looks something like that to me too.”⁴⁷⁹ Critics have noted the significance of Katharine’s insight, but rarely is it acknowledged that the drawing is the product of Denham shirking his duties. In my view, the scene resonates with that initial meeting in which Katharine ceases to perform affective and emotional labor in front of him. Denham draws “in idleness, and because he could do nothing further with words,” when he feels “himself more cut off from her than ever.” Woolf suggests a correspondence between Katharine’s willingness to let her attention slacken in his presence and his offering of visual proof that he has done the same. The experience is one of intimacy but, again, of an intimacy built around distance. Michael Rosenthal writes that, “...all the novels from *Mrs. Dalloway* on manage to end on a final note of affirmation: a party is given, a lighthouse is reached, a pageant produced. Such accomplishments, however trivial they might appear, suggest the basic commitment to living made by the fiction.”⁴⁸⁰ *Night and Day* ends with the lovers

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. (422-423)

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. (423)

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. (429)

⁴⁸⁰ Michael Rosenthal. “The Problem of Fiction.” *Critical Essays on Virginia Woolf*, ed. Morris Beja

disentangling their hands and murmuring good-bye. The love story, while perhaps not aspirational, explores the willingness to abandon compulsory work and conventional ambitions in order to cultivate “the privacy of the soul.”

By the end of the novel, each of the three main characters—Katharine, Ralph, and Mary—abandons his or her original ambitions. Yet despite—or thanks to—Woolf’s use of a broadly realist form of narration, it is impossible to determine when they made their decisions, why they made them, and whether the process is visible from an external standpoint. *Night and Day* thus suggests that watching someone work can be an imperfect and unsatisfying form of observation, even as it uses Katharine and Ralph’s shared awareness of this limitation as the means of uniting them. Managerial observation is thus oddly redeemed and not redeemed here. Vicki Mahaffey has called for critics to place interior monologue within the context of “a more expansive category, something like fiction that stages the animated, moment-to-moment experience of one or more characters against the backdrop of a larger frame of reference,” which registers both “the lyrical flow of a character’s thoughts” and “prompts the reader to see him or her from the outside as well.”⁴⁸¹ Reading *Night and Day* in response to this call, we may note the surprising point that a larger frame of reference is provided by the administrative gaze around the moment of the Great War, and its relation to literary character.

Coda

In 1923, a year after the publication of her first formally innovative novel, *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf produced the third and final iteration of an essay that articulates the

⁴⁸¹ Vicki Mahaffey. “Streams beyond Consciousness: Stylistic Immediacy in the Modernist Novel.” *A Handbook of Modernist Studies*. (42)

differences between the Georgian literary sensibility and that of their immediate predecessors. In “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” Woolf critiques the aesthetic faults of the Edwardian materialists in newly trenchant terms:

They have looked very powerfully, searchingly, and sympathetically out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but never at [Mrs. Brown], never at life, never at human nature. And so they have developed a technique of novel-writing which suits their purpose; they have made tools and developed conventions which do their business. But those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools death.⁴⁸²

Woolf once again distinguishes her own attempts to investigate psychological depth from the Edwardian materialists’ dependence on realist representation. An Edwardian author might notice a stylish older woman pausing at a curb to let a car pass and try to reveal her character by capturing her exact turn of expression, by noting the contrast between her and the neighborhood through which she walks, or by registering the state of her clothes. In contrast, Woolf describes the same scene in *Mrs. Dalloway* by recording Clarissa’s interior life: her inattention to her environment, her exclamations, the brevity of certain sensorial experiences, the flashes of memories, her anticipation of tedious social engagements, and her wincing at past hurts. Through these methods, Woolf attempts to grasp what she calls “human nature,” a task that she claims the Edwardians have neglected.

There is no doubt that the two literary styles differ in terms of technique, mood, and affect. Yet Woolf, not one to shy away from polemic, perhaps overstates the distinction in claiming that the Edwardian writers devised literary conventions that led to “ruin” and “death.” To a contemporary reader, the Edwardian catalogues of setting and

⁴⁸² Virginia Woolf. Virginia Woolf. “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Bennett.” *Critical Essays*. (14)

character detail can appear more like an appendix to the long tradition of realism, rather than a more calamitous literary exercise. It must have occasionally seemed so to Woolf because her certainty about the outcome of Georgian literary experimentation was far from settled in the first iteration of these essays. Written in 1919, the year she published *Night and Day*, Woolf considers the different stylistic hallmarks of Edwardians and Georgians in “Modern Novels.” “Let the historian of literature decide. It is for him, too, to ascertain whether we are now at the beginning, or middle, or end, of a great period of prose fiction; all that we ourselves can know is that, whatever stage we have reached, we are still in the thick of battle.”

What happened over the span of five years that led Woolf to cease waiting for a literary Herodotus and instead to make the pronouncement herself? Perhaps it was that the stream of consciousness had found purchase in a fickle cultural economy. In *Modern Epic*, Franco Moretti concurs with Woolf’s earlier essay that the modernist period was contentious and supplies the reason why: “Because, at the turn of the century, Western individuals have lost their unity, and it is necessary to find a language for the divided Self. But what language? No one knows. And so all sorts of attempts are made. Blindly.”⁴⁸³ In a period defined by experimentation, the stream of consciousness is perhaps the modernist literary innovation *par excellence*. It is the blind attempt that succeeds. The attempt to capture “human nature” through a deeply psychologized description of the mental life of characters persists.

William James initially coined the term “stream of consciousness” to explain the workings of the mind. Rather than describe the mind’s activity purely in terms of the

⁴⁸³ Franco Moretti. *Modern Epic*. (177)

fullest expressions of rational thought, James incorporated the part of mental life that rests in the spaces between full articulation. The mind reacts and recalls, interacts and interprets, is distracted and engaged by networks of experiences and associations. And this discontinuity of mental processes could, as it turned out, be rendered in literature through parataxis, sentence fragments, exclamations, ellipses, and irregular or omitted punctuation. Although present in novels from earlier eras, the literary technique of the same name became more prevalent during the modernist heyday. The stream of consciousness helped moved literary attention from scenes of dramatic tension to the banality of everyday experience—from sickbeds to the daily commute, from fever dreams to daydreams, from suicidal ideation to absentminded reverie. The suppleness of the form translated from country to country, from season to season; the stream of consciousness became an innovation exportable and endlessly variable.

Moretti understands the cultural utility of the portable literary style this way:

Well, the stream of consciousness is one way—and perhaps the most successful—of confronting the situation of extreme tension. It begins as the sign of a crisis: of an Ego bombarded, divided, in difficulty. But gradually it learns to confront the countless stimuli swirling through the streets of the modern city, and to capture them. It provides the metropolis with a form, and its inhabitants with a perspective. So it is no surprise that the stream of consciousness should be the most famous technique of the twentieth century: in view of what it has done, it fully deserves to be.⁴⁸⁴

In his account, realism ceased to have sufficient power in rendering character motivation because the theory of unified selfhood collapsed. Further, he claims that if literary critics and reviewers chose *Ulysses* as the ur-text of modernism, this was not because Joyce uses the stream of consciousness to express transcendence or to generate narrative conflict. Instead, by resisting any focalizing or foregrounding, Joyce makes the conditions of

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid. (124)

advertising's dual promise of potentiality and fulfillment seem eternally available:

...For every narrative imposes choices or exclusions—while the stream of consciousness seeks to keep the field of the possible wide open. And so, instead of a well developed fantasy, it gives us four drafts of ten words: one in the past, one in the present, one in the future, and one purely hypothetical. None of them is placed in the foreground; and none is excluded from the foreground. They are, precisely, possibilities in the pure state: to be enjoyed as such, without any further consequence.⁴⁸⁵

Joyce was able to solve a problem in an evolving phase of the capitalist economy by not hierarchizing any single narrative thread. By contrast, other authors, Woolf included, “yielded to the temptation to give the stream of consciousness an ancillary function. The new technique was ideal—for *making a crux in the story more dramatic*. Or else, it was perfect—for *making everyday reality poetic again*.”⁴⁸⁶ My argument is a supplement to Moretti's, but I claim that Woolf solved a different economic problem with the stream of consciousness. By “making everyday reality poetic again,” she was able, among other things, to make pleasurable—and richly problematic—the technique of monitoring an ordinary person engaged in an ordinary task as that process unfolds.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. (146-7)

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid. (original emphasis, 179)

Bibliography

- Anonymous Review, *Times Literary Supplement*, October 30, 1919
- Anstey, F. *Vice Versa or, A Lesson to Fathers*. New York: D Appleton and Company. 1882.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. *The Long Twentieth Century; Money, Power and the Origins of our Times*. London: Verso. 2010. Print
- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2003. Print
- Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1994. Print
- Baucom, Ian. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1999
- Bell, Quentin. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography Volume 2*. London: Harcourt Books. 1972. Print
- Bennett, Joan. "Characters and Human Beings" *Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1964. Print
- Berlant, Lauren. *The Anatomy of National Fantasy; Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1991. Print
- Besant, Walter. *The Doubts of Dives (1889)*. LaVergne: Kessinger Publishing. 2011. Print
- Bledstein, Burton J. *The Culture of Professionalism; The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*. New York: W.W.Norton & Company. 1976. Print
- Booker, M. Keith. *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth Century English Novel*. London: Cambridge University Press. 2009. Print
- Briggs, Julia, ed. *Virginia Woolf: Introductions to the Major Works*. London: Virago. 1994
- Brown, Bill. "The Secret Life of Things (Virginia Woolf and the Matter of Modernism)" *Modernism and Modernity*. Vol. 6 No. 2 April 1999
- Bruce Robbins. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good: Toward a Literary History of the Welfare State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2007

Bruno, Giordano. *Cantus Circaeus; The Incantations of Circe*. Trans. Darius Klein. Ouroboros Press. 2009. Print

Burke, Kenneth. "The Modern English Novel Plus" *Dial*, 70, May 1921

Cazdyn, Eric *The Already Dead: The New Time of Politics, Culture, and Illness*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2012

Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., Istvan. *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. 2008

Daly, Nicholas. *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1999. Print.

Davidson, Hilda Ellis and Chaudhri, Anna, eds. *A Companion to the Fairy Tale*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer. 2003

Doyle, A Conan. "The Great Keinplatz Experiment" *The Great Keinplatz Experiment and Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen*. New York: George H. Doran. 1905

Esty, Jed. *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2011

Fargnoli, A. Nicholas and Michael Patrick Gillespie. *James Joyce A to Z: The Essential Reference to the Life and Work*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1995

Felski, Rita. "Introduction." Special edition about the Everyday in *New Literary History*. 2002

--- "The Invention of Everyday Life." *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture*. New York: New York University Press. 2000

Fraser, Nancy. "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode." *The New Left Review* 86, March-April 2014

Froula, Christine. "War, Peace, Internationalism." *Cambridge Guide to Bloomsbury*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2005

--- *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde*. New York: Columbia University Press 2005

Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2013

- Gagnier, Regina. *The Insatiability of Human Wants*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2000
- Gerzina, Gretchen Holbrook. "Bloomsbury and Empire" *Cambridge Guide to Bloomsbury*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2005
- Gilbert, Sandra and Gubar, Susan. *No Man's Land; The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century. Vol. 2 Sexchanges*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1989. Print
- Gilbreth, Frank. *Primer of Scientific Management*. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company. 1912
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution*. Charleston: Nabu Press. 2012
- Herland. *The Yellow Wall-Paper and Selected Writings*. New York: Penguin Books. 1999. Print
- *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography*. New York: Arno. 1935. Print
- Halttunen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle Class Culture in America, 1830-1870*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1982. Print
- Haskell, Thomas L. (ed.). "The Production of Expertise and the Constitution of Expert Power." *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1984
- Highmore, Ben. *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. London: Routledge. 2002
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*. New York: Vintage Books. 1987. Print
- Hobson, John A. *Problems of Poverty: An Inquiry into the Industrial Condition of the Poor*. London: Methune & Co. 1989
- Hochman, Barbara. The Reading Habit and "The Yellow Wallpaper." *American Literature* vol.74, no.1 March 2002. Duke University Press
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2012

- Hunt, Caroline C. "Counterparts: Identity Exchange and the Young Adult Audience" *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*. Volume 11, No. 3. Fall 1986
- Hussey, Mark, *Virginia Woolf A to Z*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996
- Jameson, Frederick. *The Political Unconscious, Narrative As A Socially Symbolic Act*. New York: Cornell University Press. 1981. Print
- Jameson, Frederic. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fiction*. New York: Verso. 2007. Print
- Johnson, George M. "'The Spirit of the Age': Virginia Woolf's Response to Second Wave Psychology." *Twentieth Century Literature*
- Joyce, James. *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: B.W. Huebsch, Inc, 1922
- Joyce, Stanislaus. Richard Ellmann, ed *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years*. Cambridge: De Capo Press 2003
- Lane, Jeremy. Ed. Pfister, Manfred. "James Joyce's Book of Laughter and Forgetting." *A History of English Laughter: Laughter from Beowulf to Beckett and Beyond*. New York: Rodopi. 2002
- Kenner, Hugh. *A Shrinking Island: The Modern English Writers*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1989. Print
- Kimball, Bruce A. *The "True Professional Ideal" in America: A History*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. 1992 Print
- Lane, Ann "The Fictional World of Charlotte Perkins Gilman" in *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader*. Ann Lane, ed. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. 1999
- To Herland and Beyond: The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. New York: Penguin Group. 1991.
- Larson, Magali Sarfatti. *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*. Berkley: University of California Press. 1977. Print
- LeFebvre, Henri, *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume 2*. Verso 2002 (first in 1961) Trans. John Moore
- Lehrer, Jonah. *Proust was a Neuroscientist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 2007
- Leonardi, Susan J. "Bare Places and Ancient Blemishes: Virginia Woolf's Search for New Language in *Night and Day*." *Novel* 19, Winter 1986

- Levenson, Michael. *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922*. London: Cambridge University Press. 1984. Print
- Levenson, Michael, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1999. Print
- Lewis, C.S. *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*. London: Geoffrey Bles. 1955
- Lewis, Pericles. *Cambridge Guide to Modernism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2007
- . *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2007.
- Lindert, Peter H. *Growing Public, Social Spending and Economic Growth Since the Eighteenth Century. Volume 1, The Story*. Cambridge: Cambridge University .2004
- Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. London: T Tegg and Son. 1836
- Lovecraft, H. P. "The Thing on the Doorstep" *The Thing On The Doorstep And Other Weird Stories*. New York: Penguin Books. 2001 Print
- Lukacs, Georg. "Narrate or Describe." *Writer and Critic; And Other Essays*. trans. Arthur Kahn. London: Merlin Press. 1970
- . *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* "Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann" Trans. John and Necke Mander. London: Merlin Press. 1972
- Mahaffey, Vicki. "Streams beyond Consciousness: Stylistic Immediacy in the Modernist Novel." *A Handbook of Modernist Studies* (ed. by J. M. Rabaté). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. .2013
- Majumdar, Saikat. *Prose of the World: Modernism and the Banality of Empire*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2013
- Mansfield, Katherine. "A Ship Comes into the Harbour" *The Athenaeum*, 56, 21 November 1919: 1227
- "A Ship Comes into the Harbour," *Novels and Novelists*, J Middleton Murry.ed. London: Constable 1930
- Mao, Douglas. *Solid Objects: Modernism and the Test of Production*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1998. Print

- Marshall, Alfred. *Principles of Economics*. London: MacMillan and Company. 1890
- McClanahan, Annie. "Bad Credit Scoring" *Representations* Vol. 126 Issue 1
- Menand, Louis. *Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and His Context*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1987. Print
- Mirsky, Dimitri, ed. Majumdar, Robin and McLaurin. *Virginia Woolf :A Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge 1975.
- Moretti, Franco. *Graphs, Maps, Trees; Abstract Models for Literary History*. London: Verso. 2005. Print
- Moretti, Franco. *Modern Epic; The World System from Goethe to Garcia Marquez*. Trans. Quintin Hoare. London: Verso. 1996. Print
- Morretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. Trans. Albert Sbragia. London: Verso. 1987. Print
- Morris, William. *News from Nowhere: Or, An Epoch of Rest*. Boston: Roberts Brothers. 1891
- Newte, Horace W.C. *The Ealing Miracle: A Realistic Story*. Memphis: General Books. 2010. Print
- Nicholls, Peter. *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*. Berkley: University of California Press. 1995. Print
- Nussbaum, Martha. *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon Press. 1995. Print
- Olson, Liesl. *Modernism and the Ordinary*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2009
- Pain, Barry. *An Exchange of Souls*. New York: Hippocampus Press. 2007. Print
- Paolo Virno. "Exodus," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1996 Print
- Park, Sowon S. "Suffrage and Virginia Woolf: 'The Mass behind the Single Voice'" *The review of English Studies*. New Series, Vol. 56. No. 223 (Feb. 2005)
- Perkin, Harold. *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* Routledge: London: Routledge. 1989. Print
- Petzold, Dieter. "A Race Apart: Children in Late Victorian and Edwardian Children's

- Books.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*. Volume 17, No. 3 Fall 1992.
- Peyser, Thomas. *Utopia and Cosmopolis: Globalization in the Era of American Literary Realism*. Durham: Duke University Press. 1998. Print
- Pohl, Nicole. *Women, Space and Utopia, 1600-1800*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006
- Quigley, Megan M. “Modern Novels and Vagueness.” *Modernism/modernity*. Volume 15, Number 1, January 2008
- Rainey, Lawrence. “The cultural economy of Modernism” *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Michael Levenson ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2007
- Robbins, Bruce. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good; Toward a Literary History of the Welfare State*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 2007
- Roger Lancelyn Green. “A Neglected Novelist: ‘F. Anstey’” *English* (1957)
- Rosenbaum, Stanford Patrick, ed. “Virginia Woolf by E.M. Forster.” *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs and Commentary*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1995 Print.
- *Victorian Bloomsbury: The Early History of the Bloomsbury Group* Vol. 1. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. 1987
- Rosenthal, Michael. “The Problem of Fiction” *Critical Essays on Virginia Woolf* Ed. Morris Beja. Boston, Mass: GK Hall and Co. 1985. Print
- Sayeau, Michael. “Work, Unemployment, and the Exhaustion of Fiction in Heart of Darkness.” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*: June 1, 2006, Vol. 39, Issue 3
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1998. Print
- Sen, Amartya. *The Idea of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2009
- Shelley, Mary. *Transformation*. London: Hesperus press Limited. 2005. Print
- Smith, Adam. *The Wealth of Nations*. New York: Random House. 2000 (first published in 1776). Print
- Smith, Thorne. *Turnabout*. U.K.: Dodo Press. 1931. Print
- Squier, Susan Merrill. “Tradition and Revision: The Classic City Novel and Virginia Woolf’s *Night and Day*.” *Women Writers and the City: Essays in Feminist Literary*

- Criticism*, ed. Susan Merrill Squier. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. 1984. Print
- Stoker, Bram *Dracula*. London: Penguin Books. 1993
- Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of Literary Genre*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1979
- Szalay, Michael "Wallace Stevens and the Invention of Social Security"
Modernism/modernity vol. 5, no.1 01/1998
- Taylor, Frederick. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers. 1913
- Trotter, David. *Paranoid Modernism; Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2001. Print
- Trotter, David. *The English Novel in History 1895-1920*. London: Routledge. 1993
- Tucker, Nicholas. "Vice Versa: The First Subversive Novel for Children." *Children's Literature in Education*. Athlone Press, Inc. 1987. Vol. 18. No. 3
- Underhill, Ruth Murray. "A Voyage Toward Reality." *The Bookman*, 20 August 1920
- Walkowitz, Rebecca. *Cosmopolitan Style. Modernism Beyond the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2006
- Warsh, David. *Knowledge and the Wealth of Nations: A Story of Economic Discovery*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2006. Print
- Weeks, Kathi. *The Problem with Work; Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2011
- Weller, Joyce Piell. *Who Paid for Modernism?: Art, Money, and the Fiction of Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press. 1997. Print
- Wells, H. G. "The story of the Late Mr. Elvisham." *The Plattner Story and Others*. London (1896) Transferred to Macmillan and Co., 1903. Reprint 1904.
- West, Rebecca. "Imagisme," *The New Freewoman*, volume 1 number 5 (15 August 1913)
- Whitson, Kevin. "The Reception of Scientific Management by British Engineers, 1890-1914" *Business History Review*, Summer 1997, v. 71
- Wicke, Jennifer. "Mrs. Dalloway Goes to Market: Woolf, Keynes, and Modern Markets."

- Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, Fall 1994, Vol. 28, Issue 1
- Williams, Raymond "The Bloomsbury Fraction." *Culture and Materialism*. London: Verso. 1980
- Key Terms; A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1983
- Wilson, Christopher P. "Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Steady Burghers: the Terrain of Herland," *Women's Studies*, 1986, vol. 12
- Wodesshouse, P. G. *Laughing Gas*. London: Arrow Books. 2008. Print
- Wolloch, Alex. *One Vs. the Many*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 2003. Print
- Woolf, Leonard. *Downhill All the Way: An Autobiography of the Years 1919-1939, Volume 4*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World. 1967
- Woolf, Virginia, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume II 1923-28*. Harcourt Inc.
- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. New York: Harcourt Inc. 1981. Print
- . "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Bennett" *Critical Essays*.
- . "Women and Fiction." *Selected Essays*. London: Oxford University Press. 2008. Print
- . *A Moment's Liberty*
- . *Room of One's Own*. New York: Harcourt Inc. 1981. Print
- . *Diaries*
- . *Jacob's Room*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2007. Print
- . *Night and Day*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics. 2005. Print
- Wussow, Helen. "Conflict of Language in Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*" *Journal of Modern Literature*. XV: Summer 1989 Temple University

Kara Wedekind

230 Catalan Blvd
St. Petersburg, Fla., U.S.A
Mobile: (917) 292-1923
email: kara.wedekind@gmail.com
born: June 8, 1980 in St. Petersburg, FL

EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore, MD	2007-present
<i>Doctoral Candidate</i> (expected September 2016)		
Thesis: "Working in Shifts: Character and Mobility in Late Nineteenth-and Early Twentieth Century-Literature"		
Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore, MD	2008
<i>Masters of Arts</i>		
University of Maryland	College Park, MD	2005-2006
<i>Masters of Journalism</i> , Philip Merrill College of Journalism		
University of Chicago	Chicago, IL	2002
<i>Bachelor of Arts</i> in English Language and Literature		

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AWARDS

Grant recipient for the NEH Summer Institute: World War I and the Arts	2014
Participant in The Futures of American Studies at Dartmouth University	2014
Founding member of the Women's Graduate Student Group	2014
Grant recipient for the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell University	2013
Allen Grossman Teaching Fellowship	2011
The Napier Wilt Prize for Best Critical B.A. Thesis, Honorable Mention	2002
Departmental Honors, University of Chicago	2002
General Honors, University of Chicago	2002

PRESENTATIONS

Public Reading as part of NEH Summer Institute at the Cincinnati Mercantile Exchange Library in 2014

"Utopian Desire and Paths for Exodus in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*" at the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth University, in 2014

"The Failures of Redistribution in Body Swap Fiction, 1870-1930," at the Yale University Comparative Literature Graduate Conference, "Shapeshifters: Recycling and Literature" in 2014

“Cognitive Estrangement in Early Identity Exchange Fiction,” at the International Conference on Narrative, in 2014

“The Intersection of the Everyday and the Fantastic in Body Swap Fiction from 1882 to 1931,” at the University of Maryland, Disrealities Conference, in 2013

“One Spirit, Two Bodies: Love and Marriage in Body Swap Fiction, 1887-1931”, at Pop Culture Association/American Culture Association Annual Conference, in 2013

“Mixed Form: Cognitive Estrangement, Tonal Inconsistency, and Incomplete Closure in Body Swap Fiction, 1882 to 1931” at the University of Florida, Marxist Reading Group, in 2013

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer/Instructor:

Self-Interest and Common Good, expository writing course, Fall 2014
Global Tales of Transformation, upper-level English course, Spring 2014
Advertising and Literary Modernism, introductory English course, Spring 2013
Self-Interest and Common Good, expository writing course, Fall 2011
Self-Interest and Common Good, expository writing course, Spring 2012
The Ethics of Work, expository writing course, Fall 2009
The Ethics of Work, expository writing course, Spring 2010

As Teaching Assistant:

The Modern Novel (with Adam Grener), Fall 2013
British Literature II (with Douglas Mao), Spring 2009
Eighteen Century British Literature (with Frances Ferguson), Fall 2008

AREAS OF RESEARCH

20th Century American Literature
late 19th and early 20th Century British Literature
20th Century Anglophone Literature
Literary Theory and its History
Aesthetics
Cultural Studies
Speculative Fiction

LANGUAGES

Proficiency in French, Italian, German

JOURNALISM EXPERIENCE

Capital Newswire Washington, DC 2006
Reporter
Responsible for the education and legal beats, wrote articles that were picked up by news outlets throughout the Mid-Atlantic, including FoxNews.com and *The Baltimore Sun*

Baltimore Sun Baltimore, MD 2005
Arts and Entertainment Intern
Wrote articles on music and theatre performances, in addition to compiling a weekly calendar of local arts events

American Journalism Review College Park, MD 2005
Editorial Assistant
Fact-checked articles for publication, wrote a profile on a photography ombudsman

D.C. Style Magazine Washington, DC 2005-2006
Freelance Writer

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Community Transportation Association Washington, DC 2006-2007
Project Coordinator
Assist in curriculum development to train disability program navigators
Develop and edit content on a range of employment-related topics

Maternal and Child Health Policy Research Center Washington, DC 2004-2005
Research Assistant
Analyzed information on best practices for a Medicaid reimbursement study
Participated in interviews with Medicaid officials and summarized the results

Swedish Covenant Hospital Chicago, IL 2003-2004
Continuing Medical Education Coordinator
Planned weekly and monthly lectures that provided area physicians with Continuing Education credit hours